

Chapter 17

The Mosques of Ṣan‘ā’

The Yemeni Islamic Setting

i Introduction

In a traditional Islamic city the mosque, need it be said, has a central place in people's lives—and nowhere more so than in Ṣan‘ā’. This volume only touches upon the immense lore of Islamic practice, rites, tenets, and a little only is said of popular credences, many inherited from the pagan ages,¹ as Yemenis themselves recognise. An analytical study of al-Rāzī's history should, in itself, yield data on early religious developments and memories, even when faint, of ancient controversies. These prefatory pages pick out a few items of significance, making no claim to be an all-over survey. If they mingle grave with gay this reflects how it is with Yemenis who do, mostly, take Islam seriously and attempt, in greater or lesser degree, to follow its precepts, but, sensibly, they do not see this incompatible with a certain sense of humour over religious matters.

The ordinary Ṣan‘ānī man goes, or used to go to the mosque before sunrise at the Adhān al-Fajr call to prayer and the Ṣalāt al-Ṣubḥ must be in the mosque. During the day he will be at work and pray where he is but officials can pray the Ṣalāt al-Zuhr at mid-day in the Jāmi‘. The Ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr will often be prayed at the qāt session (*fi ‘l-maqīl*), but on finishing his work a man will go to the mosque, pray the Maghrib prayer and stay on till after the ‘Ashā prayer. He will then go home for his simple supper of a *jaḥīnah* of millet-flour and *qishr*-coffee. Ordinary folk take advantage of the availability of water there for ablution which may be difficult to get at home and not plentiful. Women do not go to mosques but they may make pilgrimages to shrines like their visiting the Farwah b. Musayk mosque.

Some twenty-five years ago the Friday Prayer was attended in the Jāmi‘ Kabīr and to some extent in Ḥanṣal, the best of the Bīr al-‘Azab mosques, but now the Friday Prayer is held in many mosques. At the Jāmi‘ however it is still well attended.

Tribesfolk in contradistinction to city folk are reckoned to have little care for the practice of religion as expressed in the saying from the Mashriq, ‘*Lā jadda-nā ṣallā wa-lā iḥnā naṣūm*, Our ancestor did not pray and we do not fast’. Many tribesfolk in the districts more distant from Ṣan‘ā’ have never even learned how to perform the prayer.

It is said, I do not know with what truth, that the Banī Dhubyān of al-Ja‘rā district used to chose one man from each sub-tribe to perform the Ramaḍān fast, and he would fast the last day of the month only! A proverb, ‘*Ḥit (= jā‘at) minnak yā Bayt Allāh*, It's your fault, House of God’, arises from the tale of a man who habitually neglected to go to the mosque to pray, and when he did so, found it shut.²

1 Rossi, *L'arabo parlato*, 186, has a few notes on popular religion.

ii Mawlid

The Mawlid al-Nabiyy is read in the mosques on the Prophet's Birthday (12th Rabi‘ I). The term *mawlid* however seems to be loosely applied to various *adḥkār*, perhaps to be translated as hymns, and perhaps recital of parts of the Prophet's life, sung at various joyous occasions, such as a birth, a new arrival from abroad etc. This seems to be common amongst women and one might say that she makes a votive offering (*tundhir*) of a *mawlid*. A *nashshadah* would be engaged to sing on such occasions.

iii The Three Collects (Tasbīḥah)

Any visitor to Ṣan‘ā’ will recall being wakened by the muezzins of the mosques calling out, more or less in unison, the three *tasbīḥahs* which are accompanied by the barking of the dogs, the first at 1.30 a.m., the second at 3 a.m., and the third ending at five minutes before dawn. This is not a practice followed in the Shāfi‘ī parts of the Yemen which content themselves with the *adhān*. The Arabic texts given below contain praise of God and his omnipotence, the petition for his mercy and benevolence to mankind whose only resource is He. They include Qur‘ān quotations (*sūrah*s XXXIII, 56, XVII, 111, XXXIII, 14). Ḥusayn al-‘Amrī who provided the text, remarked that the delivery would vary in accordance with the competence of the individual muezzin in classical Arabic. The text is printed with its pausal forms as he recited it, but the punctuation is inserted.

The First Tasbīḥah

Bismillāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm.

‘Inna ‘llāha wa-malā‘ikata-hu ‘ala ‘l-Nabiyy. Yā ayyuha ‘lladhīna āmanū ṣallū ‘alay-hi wa-sallimū taslīmā.’ Allāhumma ṣalli wa-sallim ‘alā Muḥammad-in wa-‘alā ‘Alī Muḥammad, kamā ṣallayta wa-sallamta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa-‘alā ‘Alī Ibrāhīm, innāka ḥamīd-un maḥīd, Min layli-nā ḥadhā ilā Yaḥyā ‘l-Dīn.

Ilāhi anta dhū fadl-in wa-minan,

Wa-innī dhu ‘l-khaṭāyā fa-‘fu ‘annī,

Wa-mā lī ḥīlat-un illā rajā‘ī,

Li-‘afwi-ka, idh ‘afawta yā Rabbī, wa-ḥusnu ḡannī.

Yā man yarā mā fi ‘l-ḡamīrī wa-yasma‘u,

Anta ‘l-mu‘iddu li-kulli mā yutawawqa‘u,

Yā man ilay-ka ‘l-mushtakā wa-‘l-mafza‘u,

Wa-ilay-ka amru ‘l-khalqī ‘ā‘idu,

Yā man khazā‘inu rizqī-hi fi qawli ‘Kun’,

2 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, 400, no. 1193.

Umnun, fa-inna 'l-khayra 'inda-ka ajza'u.
Mā lī siwā qar'i li-bābi-ka wasilat-un,
Mā lī siwā qar'i li-bābi-ka ḥilat-un,
Wa-mani 'lladhī ad'ū wa-ahtifu bi-smi-hi,
In kāna fadlu-ka 'an faqiri-ka yumna'u?
Wa-bi-ḥaqqi man aḥbabta-hu wa-ba'athta-hu
Yassir la-nā faraj-an qarib-an, yā Ilāhī lā tubā'idu.
Yā Ḥayyū, yā Qayyūmu, yā Arḥama 'l-rāḥimīna,
Irḥam-nā wa-āfi-nā wa-fu 'annā
Min 'adhābi 'l-qabri wa-'l-Nāri ajir-nā, [thrice]
Wa-fi fannati 'l-Firdawsi iskin-nā/idkhl-nā [thrice]
Lā ilāha illa 'llāh, lā ilāha illa 'llāh, al-ma'būdu fī kullī makān.
Ditto al-mawṣūfu bi-'l-kamāl.
Ditto Rabbi 'l-'arshi 'l-'aẓīm.
Ditto Dhu 'l-Jalālī wa-'l-ikrām.
Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-'llāhī 'l-'aliyyi 'l-'aẓīm.

The Second Tasbīḥah

La ka 'l-ḥamdu kathīr-an tayyib-an mubārak-ā
Ditto yamla'u 'l-arḍa wa-'l-sama'a
Ditto lā yuraddu wa-lā yu'addu wa-lā yuḥṣā.
Ditto awwalu-hu fī 'l-samā'i wa-ākhiru-hu
fī 'l-arḍ.
Ditto astalidhdhu bi-hi dhikrā.
La-ka 'l-ḥamdu fī 'l-ūlā, la-ka 'l-ḥamdu fī 'l-ukhrā.
La-ka 'l-ḥamdu fī 'l-shiddati, la-ka 'l-ḥamdu fī 'l-rakhā.
La-ka 'l-ḥamdu fī 'l-darrā'i, la-ka 'l-ḥamdu fī 'l-sarrā.

Allāhu akbaru, Allāhu akbaru kabīrā, wa-'l-ḥamdu li-'llāhī
kathīrā, wa-subḥāna 'llāhī bukratā wa-aṣilā kabbartu
kabīr-an wa-'azzamtu 'aẓīmā. [thrice] 'Wa-qul al-ḥamdu li-'llāhī
'lladhī lam yattakhidh walad-an wa-lam yakun la-hu sharik-un
fī 'l-mulki wa-lam yakun la-hu waliyy-un mina 'l-dhull wa-
kabbir-hu takbīr-ā. Wa-'l-ḥamdu li-'llāhī Rabbi 'l-'Ālamīn.

The Third Tasbīḥah

Subḥāna 'l-Maliki 'l-fattāh,
Subḥāna Fāliqī 'l-iṣbāḥ,
Subḥāna Khāliqī 'l-arwāḥ,
Subḥāna Mūthiqī 'l-ṭayr bi-'l-janāḥ,
Subḥāna man adhaba 'l-layla wa-atā bi-'l-ṣabāḥ,
Subḥāna Khāliqī 'l-layli wa-'l-nahār,
Subḥāna 'l-'Aliyyi 'l-'A'lā,
Subḥāna Dhi 'l-mulki wa-'l-malakūt, Rabbi 'l-'izzati wa-'l-jabarūt,
Subḥāna 'l-Maliki 'l-quddūs,
Subḥāna man ta'azzaza bi-'l-qudrati wa-'l-baqā, wa-qahara 'l-
'ibāda bi-'l-marwī wa-'l-fanā,
Subḥāna man la-hu fī kullī sā'at-in sha'nu-hu 'l-jūdu
wa-'l-karamu wa-'l-iḥsān,
Subḥāna 'lladhī fī 'l-samā'i 'arshu-h,
Subḥāna 'lladhī fī 'l-arḍi mawṭi'u-h,
Subḥāna 'lladhī fī 'l-baḥri sabīlu-h,
Subḥāna 'lladhī fī 'l-qabri qadā'u-h,
Subḥāna 'lladhī fī 'l-Nāri sulṭānu-h,
Subḥāna 'lladhī fī 'l-fannati raḥmatu-h,

Subḥāna 'lladhī lā manjā wa-lā malja'a min-hu illā ilay-h,
Subḥāna 'llāhī wa-bi-ḥamdi-hi, Subḥāna 'llāhī 'l-'aẓīm.
[repeated five times]
Subḥāna 'llāh. [repeated ten times]
Subḥāna 'lladhī lā yanbaghi 'l-tasbīḥu illā la-h,
Subḥāna-hu wa-ta'ālā wa-'tabāraka 'llāhu aḥsanu 'l-khālīqīn.'

iv The Adhān, Qiblah, pre-Islamic and Islamic Masjids

The call to prayer (*adhān*) is mostly delivered in the court (*ṣawḥ*) of the mosque, even in those mosques which have a minaret—almost the only mosques where the *adhān* is delivered from the minaret are the Jāmi' itself, Qubbat al-Mahdī, Ṭalḥah and al-Filayḥī. Where a minaret has two balconies, an upper (*dawwār a'lā*) and a lower (*dawwār asfal*), both above its square base, the lower is used by the muezzin in such circumstances as rain or cold. The *qiblah* of San'ā' is Jabal Dīn which tradition relates was appointed so by the Prophet, but al-Hamdānī⁴ notes the ancient (pre-Islamic) *masjid* on the top of Jabal Dīn in a list of other pre-Islamic *masjids* including that of Shu'ayb (identified with Jethro) on Ḥaḍūr mountain. On Jabal Dīn is the shrine of Qudum b. Qādim⁵ of Hamdān an eponymous ancestor of one of the Ḥāshid groups. Before 1962 it had an intendant (*qā'im*) and votive offerings (*nudhūr*) were taken there. The Islamic *masjids* are San'ā', Ṣa'dah and al-Janad, built on places where 'the Apostle's camel couched', and the Mansak (a place of devotions and offering of sacrifices) of Farwah b. Musayk al-Murādī at the Jabbānah of San'ā'—which is a mosque where no distressed person (*makrūb*) prays but his prayer is answered.⁶ The term 'blessed mosques' (*al-masājid al-mubārakah*) means those where prayers are answered (*al-mustajābah al-da'awāt*).⁷ If a mosque is blessed in this way it is an indication of the uprightness (*ṣalāḥ*) of its founder as having used 'lawful' money (*al-māl al-ḥalāl*), i.e., not acquired by unjust means, to construct it.

In the 'Urḍi-Barracks south of the city is the mosque of Wahb b. Munabbih b. Kāmil al-Abnāwī, and his tomb, reputed to have been founded by Wahb himself—this we were unable to visit so we do not know if the existing structure is old or not. It seems that only the location of the tomb itself has any claim to antiquity. Wahb (34-114/654-5 to 732-3), said to have been born in Dhamār, is credited with great local importance in his age, but not much is known of him. Al-Rāzī⁸ calls him Sayyid al-Ḥukamā' and Imām of the people of San'ā' in his day, adding that he was in charge of the *qāḍi*-ship (*qaḍā'*) of the city during the reign of the Umayyad 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, and Imām of the Qur'ān readers (*qurrā'*). He was of Persian descent but considered of the people of the Yemen. Fragments of the *Sīrah* he composed have recently been edited⁹—Professor Kister sees in it the attempt to reconcile Sunnī and Shī'ah tradition—very significant since San'ā' is credited with Shī'ah attitudes from an early age—some holding that this goes back to the time of 'Alī himself. Another famous early traditionist contemporary with him was Ṭāwūs b. Kaysān (ob. 106/724-5) after whom an ancient San'ā' mosque¹⁰ is named. His father was a Persian who married a *mawlāh* woman of the Ḥimyarite Āl Hūd, but Ṭāwūs disclaims being of the *mawālī*.¹¹

3 This formula throughout the Islamic world is repeated seven times before the *shurūq*, sun-rise before Ṣalāt al-'Id.

4 *Ikhl VIII*, 86.

5 See E. Griffini, 'Il poemetto di Qudam Ben Qādim', *RSO*, Roma, 1916-18, 293-363. It contains a prophecy that from the family of Aḥmad will come forth one day 'un *qā'im* che farā atto di secessione, farā la Hegira, al pari dei *muhājirīn* jemeniti della stirpe di Qaḥṭān' (p. 307).

6 *Ikhl VIII*, loc. cit.

7 To this may be compared the usage of 'alā barakat Allāh = bi-'awmi 'llāh, meaning 'go with the protection of God', said to a person departing or going to see another. To a person who says he is going to get married, you might

say, *Ma'a barakat Allāh*.

8 *Tārīkh San'ā'*, 223, 367, 375, 415, *passim*. He is said to have been in charge of Bayt Māl al-Yaman, the Treasury. (Aḥ. Zakiyy Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasā'il al-'Arab*, Cairo, 1356/1937, II, 233. *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 960, records in 1121/1709 the first man to be buried at the new cemetery near Turbat Wahb b. Munabbih.)

9 Raif Georges Khoury, Wahb b. Munabbih, Teil I, *Codices Arabici Antiqui*, I, Wiesbaden, 1972. Cf. M. J. Kister, 'On the papyrus of Wahb b. Munabbih', *BSOAS*, 1974, XXXVII, iii, 545-71; Ditto: 'an addendum' op. cit., 1977, XL, i, 125-7.

10 *Masājid San'ā'*, 66.

11 Al-Rāzī, op. cit., 326.

v Shi‘ism and the Zaydīs

Writing about 290/903, Ibn Rustah¹² says that ‘Shi‘ism (*tashayyu*)’ is the predominant (doctrine) with most of its inhabitants’. The anti-‘Alawī al-Hamdānī¹³ states the case rather differently. ‘There has never ceased to be there an *‘ālim*, *faqīh*, *ḥakīm*, ascetic (*zāhid*) and one loving God with an exceeding love. . . They have a Şan‘ānī calligraphy (*khaff*) for the *maşāḥif* (of the Qur‘ān), disjointed (*mukassar*)¹⁴ and with an accomplishment (*taḥsīn*)¹⁵ which cannot be attained (elsewhere), with correct pointing (*ḥaqā‘iq al-shakl*) for which al-Khalīl praised them. They have stipulations which no others have, nor is there any stipulation for a *faqīh* among the inhabitants of the countries but they have one more eloquent, sweeter in pronunciation (*lafẓ*), more expressive of meaning and economical (in the use of words).’ Centuries later the *Ṭabaq al-ḥalwā*,¹⁶ in similar vein, says that ‘Shi‘ism (*tashayyu*)’, by God’s grace, is both old and new in Şan‘ā’, followed as a faith both by its evil and pious (*ashrār wa-abrār*). On this account Sultan ‘Umar b. ‘Alī al-Rasūl (7th/13th century) said, “Şan‘ā’ is Zaydī to its (very) stones”. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was of course sent by the Prophet to the Yemen and one of the oldest mosques in the city at Sūq al-Ḥalaqah is associated with his name—it is certainly an old foundation.

It is perhaps not widely realised for how long the Sharīfs of Mecca followed the Zaydī rite, but it looks as if the last vestige of Zaydī leadership ended during the imāmate of al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. al-Muṭahhar (701-29/1301-28) who is also claimed to have been the last Imām to fight with ‘Alī’s sword Dhu ‘l-Fiqr. Blessing (*du‘ā*) on him continued to be said in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf after the Maghrib and Fajr Prayers until the order came from the Sultan of Egypt to the Sharīf of Mecca to abolish this in 725/1325. ‘The Imām of the Zaydiyyah used to lead them in prayer between al-Rukn and al-Ḥajar al-Aswad, and when the Şalāt al-Şubḥ ended he prayed (*da‘ā*) in a loud voice, using the words, “*Allāhumma*, bless Muḥammad and the good (*aṭyāb*) People of his House from whom God has removed evil (*rijs*) and purified (*tahhar*) them. *Allāhumma*, support the right (*ḥaqq*) and those who do right, and abandon the false (*bāṭil*) and those who act falsely, by the lasting of the shadow of God, the Commander of the Faithful, the clear interpreter (*tarjumān al-bayān*), the expositor of the sciences of the Qur‘ān, the Imām, son of the Imām, the Imām Muḥammad b. al-Muṭahhar b. Yaḥyā b. Rasūl Allāh.”’ The Egyptian soldiers expelled this Imām from Mecca.¹⁷

Although the Zaydīs are strongly opposed to the ‘Ismā‘īlīs’, i.e. the Ṭayyibī Fāṭimīs, and burn their literature as a rule if they lay hands on it, they are, on an intellectual plane, far less opposed to the Sunnīs, especially the Shāfi‘īs—indeed al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī in his *Diwān* declares his support of the ‘Alawīs.¹⁸ They however combat the Sūfistic practices attached to local shrines of the Shāfi‘ī districts as pagan, in which many Shāfi‘īs would concur with them, and they are also opposed to Sūfism from the theoretical point of view. The Zaydīs are Mu‘tazilites and for them the Qur‘ān is created, a major theoretical point of difference with the Ahl al-Sunnah, but this does not seem to create discord between them.

vi Ramaḍān

During the ‘Blessed Month’ the routine of life in Şan‘ā’ is completely altered. Official business is nearly at a standstill since Government offices only open for 4 hours (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) in the morning. Since Şan‘ā’ stands so high the fast is not the hardship,

even when it falls in the summer season, that it is in Ḥaḍramawt, and in some ways it is almost a month of holiday.

The daily routine in Ramaḍān is that you sleep up to mid-day, then you pray the Zuhr Prayer. Rossi¹⁹ says that before the prayer one goes out to buy meat (*yishrak*). Then there is a reading (*darīs*)²⁰ of the Qur‘ān until the Şalāt al-‘Aşr in the late afternoon. After this you go to the Sūq if you have things to do there, and then you go for a walk (*dawrah*) in the town or the suburbs. When you hear the gun you take the *iftār/fuṣūr*, always something light to break the fast, such as a few dates, about the time of the *adhān* or before the Evening call to prayer and Şalāt al-Maghrib, then comes ‘*ashā*’-supper.

Supper would be soup of wheat in the husk with milk (*shūrabā min al-birr bi-qishr-ah ma‘a ‘l-laban*)—this was stated usually to be eaten in Ramaḍān only, and *ḥilbah ḥamīdah*, fenugreek with vinegar etc., dates. In a house in comfortable circumstances there would be meat dishes or perhaps liver, ram’s kidneys (*kibdah wa-kalāwi ‘l-kabsh*), ginger, cardamom, cummin (*zinjabil*, *hayl*, *kammūn*) and *qushnah*—onions fried with ghee (*al-başal al-maqli ma‘a ‘l-saman*)—when the meat is fried they add vegetables. This is for the *aftār*, the evening meal.

The ‘*Ashā*’-Prayer is now prayed, after which you go to the mosque for two hours to read the Qur‘ān, then you go home and read *Tafsir* or *Ḥadīth* or the Life of the Prophet, etc. until midnight. You stay in the mosque till the *midfa‘ al-saḥūr*, the pre-dawn gun, fires, then go home and take the pre-dawn meal (*ṭa‘ām al-saḥūr*) which would be white *ḥilbah*, wheat bread (*malūj birra*), and, in wealthier houses, *sha‘iriyyah*.²² You now pray the Dawn Prayer (*Şalāt al-Fajr*) and go to sleep. In Ramaḍān the mosque is closed after this prayer until 8 a.m.

The above is traditionally how a man of learning would pass his time, but for ordinary folk night is turned into day, the shops are open most of the night and there are lights everywhere. In the early morning a man comes round to wake people up to take the pre-dawn meal—in Şan‘ā’ he is known as *al-musaḥḥirātī*—and he collects a return from each household at the close of the ‘Blessed Month’.

In Wādī Ḍahr during Ramaḍān the intending pilgrims (*ḥujjāj*) or their families set up a swing (*al-madrahah*) upon which women swing (*yitadarraḥū ‘alay-hā*) by day and men by night, songs being sung about the *ḥajj*. In the country these swings are set up by the street-side or in the field (*jirbah*) but in Şan‘ā’ in court-yards (*ḥawīyyah*) or suspended from a beam in the larger rooms.

People often used customarily to fast on ‘the day of doubt’, the 30th of Sha‘bān, fearing that Sha‘bān might be short, and that the last day of Sha‘bān was in actual fact the 1st of Ramaḍān. This gave rise to a saying, ‘*In kān min Ramaḍān—w-illā*, If it is Ramaḍān (—fine!), if not, then it is for God (and should bring its reward).’²³

The ‘*Id al-Fiṭr*, often called ‘the Small Feast’ (*al-‘Id al-Şaghīr*) celebrates the conclusion of Ramaḍān, and there is a distribution of presents, always of money, called ‘*asb al-‘Id*—one might say ‘*asb min ‘ammak Aḥmad*, a gift from your paternal uncle Aḥmad. The ‘*uwwādah* (verb, *yu‘awwid*) is the gift to the wife, relations and children (*li-‘l-makhlaf aw al-raḥim wa-‘l-atfāl*). ‘*Darāhim al-‘Id şadaqah*, What you spend on the feast is alms,’ runs one of Qāḍī Ismā‘īl’s proverbs, for which of course you will be rewarded. The poor and needy console themselves if they cannot afford an animal to slaughter (known as ‘*id*) by saying, *Dhī mā ma‘ah ‘id yiqūl al-‘id ‘id al-‘afiyah*—which means in brief that health is the greatest riches.

18 See al-Zubayrī and his anti-Imāmīc polemic, *Arabian Studies*, 1978, V, 115.

19 *L’Arabo parlato*, 188.

20 Yemenis say that a cat purring is reciting *biyidris* and rather irreverently tell the story of a Turk who had heard this usage, but finding a cat stealing meat said *Qur‘ān chōk (choq) iymān yōk (yoq)*, Lots of Qur‘ān—no belief/religion.

21 The verb is *yiqashshin-ah* for adding the fried vegetables.

22 See p.545 seq.

23 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyyah*, 249, no. 700, cf. 352, no. 1036.

12 *Al-‘Aṭāq al-nafīṣah*, BGA, VII, ed. de Goeje, Leiden, 1892, 112.

13 *Şifah*, 55-6.

14 Perhaps some of the early Kūfic Qur‘āns illustrated in Martin Lings, *The Quranic art of calligraphy and illumination*, London, 1976, might fit this description, but actual Yemeni pieces of the period might be found in the trove discovered when repairing the Jāmi‘ were these available to be studied.

15 *Taḥsīn* might refer to decoration of course.

16 Fol. 71 b.

17 *Zabārah, A‘immat al-Yaman*, I, 210.

Kabsh al-ʿĪd in the town of Ta'izz²⁵

Ten days before ʿĪd al-Aḏḥā, the Feast of the Sacrifices, known as 'the Great Feast' (*al-ʿĪd al-Kabīr*) people make bonfires called *maḥāsīl* to which children come and often both men and women. Girls and married women sing songs known as *al-bālah* so-called because the refrain is *Ya ʿl-bālā wa-ʿl-layl ya ʿl-bāl*, and men might sing (*yuraddidūn*) such songs as the *rasafah*²⁴ genre.

<i>Yā qishr yā ḥālī</i>	O <i>qishr</i> -coffee, you sweet thing,
<i>Laqqamū-k al-dilālī</i>	They've poured you into metal pots,
<i>Ṭalla ʿu-k al-manāẓir</i>	They've taken you up to the belvederes,
<i>Sakabū-k al-sayānī</i>	They have poured you into china-cups,
<i>Nashshafū-k al-rijālī</i>	The men have sipped of you.

One person would sing a line and the rest repeat it after him.

vii *Al-Dhahbānī and the Kabsh al-ʿĪd Poem*

No better impression of how ordinary folk see the Great Feast can be given than by quoting the contemporary humorous poet of the colloquial, Muḥammad al-Dhahbānī, a Ṣan'ānī hailing originally from the Banī Ḥushaysh.

A neighbour of al-Dhahbānī's, on the occasion of the Feast of the Sacrifices in 1968, bought a *kabsh*—a ram—at the Friday Market in Ta'izz, but when he brought it back to the house he discovered that his *kabsh* was a ewe—for the Feast a male animal needs be slaughtered. This so tickled al-Dhahbānī's humorous fancy that he composed the verses below on the comi-tragedy.

The lack of strict time sequence, in the latter half of the poem especially, arises from the probability that the poet did not apply himself to draft it as an integrated whole. The likelihood is that, sitting in the *mafrāj*, the company would suggest and press him to describe the incident. Verse of this type is often composed by poets going on a picnic (*ʿizbah*, verb, *ta'azzab*) with meat and *qāt* outside Ṣan'ā'. Al-Dhahbānī might reflect some minutes, as I have so often seen poets do, then deliver his verses. His quatrains would be acclaimed with admiration and, when the initial build-up collapsed into anti-climax, with laughter. The *qaṣīdah* opens with the greetings conventional in this type of popular verse, then describes the preparations for the Feast and the gathering of the guests—a hint (*sotto voce*) interposing now and then at the social solecism to burst upon the assembled guests. When the butcher reveals the truth unpalatable that the animal is no *kabsh*—but a *ewe*—a babel and confusion of jesting comments breaks forth—mounting in the extravagance of its fancies to the heights of hyperbole! The termination is abruptly signalled by the advice to have recourse to the Prophet Muḥammad. (It is the established convention of centuries to conclude a poem by introducing the Prophet's name). In the latter half of the *qaṣīdah* one has in fact to think of al-Dhahbānī, led on by the enthusiasm of his audience, improvising quatrain upon quatrain regardless of any consideration of poetic unity until his inspiration runs out and he intimates to his audience that the end has come by the convention known to all.

- 1 On the Feast of Sacrifices—noblest salutations²⁶
Fresh nosegays of flowers, jewel-like,
Greetings more glorious than the sun resplendent
Despatched to the houses of al-Jaḥmaliyyah
- 2 Come an-entering through their windows and their doors
Rising like sweet basil flowers upon every roof-top²⁷
The spirits of the dear folk rejoice in their perfume,
Those above all, whose faces to see lights up one's heart.
- 3 To Ta'izz we set out, expressly to visit you
Making our way towards the house of al-ʿIyānī,
The weather cold, coming down in bag-fulls,
Bitter cold! *The hire too was a bit expensive.*
* * *
- 4 Palm-straw mats we brought with us, and cushions
Warm lined coats, blankets and charpoy beds.
Just come to the kitchen and I'll let you see the dishes,
The plates, the covers and the Bāriqī²⁸ pots.
- 5 The Feast-cake we laid out on round trays,
Four copper-pots of *kubān*²⁹ maize-cake we've made,
We've brought the Feast dessert-cake, the sweet basil,
We set up everything for the feast—BUT WE'VE NO
BEAST TO KILL!
* * *
- 6 Of lucky chance met I my good friend Maḥmūd.
Said he to me, 'Have not a fear—the *kabsh* is there,
A lamb stall-fed, so stout filled out, he cannot stand,
Whose fat belly guts would cover half the yard!'
- 7 We've brought the stone stew-pots,³⁰ the dishes,
We've ranged the cooking pans on the braziers,
All and sundry we've invited from the mosques,
Any one from the centre of the markets, and the farmers.³¹
* * *
- 8 At the round-about³² the headmen discussed (the *kabsh*)
together.
It was the topic of the room when they went to chew the
afternoon *qāt*.³³
What a complaining they made that there was no soup,
Nor any toasted bits of tripe, or meat fried, free of fat.³⁴
* * *
- 9 God preserve us (from the evil eye), may Yā-Sīn do so too.³⁵
In the butchers' hands how many a knife there is.³⁶
See how the neighbours and the poorer folk
Come hastening up to the top of al-Jaḥmaliyyah!
- 10 In this one's hand is a cowry-decorated basket,
Each one arriving sits himself cross-legged in the *dihlīz*.³⁷
All stayed assembled until the hour of four,³⁸
But the invitations they'd been given were to *nothing*!
- 11 Into the pen went (the butcher)—at his presentiment
strummed a few bars,

24 Rossi, op. cit., 101, *rasfah* (plur., *razafāt*), I heard it as *razfah* (sing.). *Laqqam* to pour. *Nashshaf*, to sip making a sucking noise, *nishfah* a sip. This particular set of verses is called *rasafat al-qishr*. These songs are also sung on such occasions as the grape-harvest (*khariṭ*) at al-Rawḍah.

25 On lines not dissimilar, the 11th/17th century Ṣan'āni poet ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ Abu ʿl-Rijāl complained in humorous verse to the Imām by whose royal order (*al-amr al-sharīf*) he was given a *kabsh* but it turned out to be a most inferior animal (*Nashr al-ʿarf*, II, 221 seq.).

26 *Wāfir* metre, The poem is in al-Dhahbānī, *al-Anghām al-shaʿbiyyah*, Ṣan'ā', n.d., 33.

27 Sweet basil grows in flower-pots (*majwāl*, pl., *majāwīl*) on the roof-tops. This is the *mashāqir* of verse 5/3.

28 Bāriq is said to be a place in Khawlān.

29 See p.550b, *khubz min al-rūmī*.

30 The *madhalah* (pl., *madāhil*) are *awānī al-ḥaraqā*, as in Qānūn Ṣan'ā', p.544a.

31 This is hyperbole—such widespread invitations are not given!

32 A *jawlah*, clearly a new word, is a round-about for traffic. This discussion by the headmen seems to have taken place after the awful discovery that the *kabsh* was a ewe.

33 *Atkū*, to recline at the *maqīl al-qāt* (colloquial *magyāl*).

34 For *qazāqiz*, toasted tripe, see p.555a. They are described as *al-tharbah*, which are eaten on the morning of ʿĪd al-Aḏḥā. For *qaliyyah* see p.555a.

35 *Yā-Sīn* is a favourite *sūrah* to recite against the evil eye. The verse commences *Yā hijāb Allāh = yā ghārat Allāh* (for which see p.147a)—*taḥmī min al-ʿayn*, may you guard against the evil eye.

One says to a person who sneezes, 'Yā-Sīn!' A proverb, 'Tigrā Yā-Sīn wa-fi yad-ak ḥajar, Recite Yā-Sīn but keep a stone in your hand', is equivalent to 'Trust in God and keep your powder dry.'

36 This is a reference to the well known Arabic proverb—'when the ox is slaughtered the knives are many.'

37 The entrance hall of a large house, see p.441a.

38 Ten a.m.

And, seeing the lamb, fell dumb and dismayed,
This lamb,' he said, 'tis sweet and plump, tis true,
But its face—why, *tis the face of a girl!*'

- * * *
- 12 Amazed I am (to think) how quickly her end had come,
The grand smell before you taste the soup made from her!
No doubt but the man who bought her fell in love with her,
Made her his sweet-heart for her enchanting Babylonian³⁹
eyes.

- * * *
- 13 Come listen now—what jokes⁴⁰ there were
When we saw her shoes and her *siṭarah* wrap,
In the middle of the *dihlīz* found her smoking cigarettes
Since she has a penchant for cigarettes.

- 14 Henna-ed⁴¹ her feet are, and her hands
Are decorated⁴² with rust-coloured patterns.
A repertoire she has too, Lebanese and Indian tunes.
They say, 'Her voice is sweeter than Hadiyyah's.'⁴³

- 15 'She has four tits,' they say, 'and one to spare',
A very reservoir of milk, falling down in screwlike spurts.⁴⁴
Reared by sharing she was too, arranged with a baker,⁴⁵
So he's got (meat) when *the Evening* arrives.

- 16 A kid too, at her side, kohl-coloured round the eyes,
And a husband—a veritable MAN⁴⁶—replete with manly
powers.
Some person has resorted to trickery against her,
She will, she says, raise a complaint against him.

- 17 Before the Shaykh of the Ewes, the Headman of Sharārah,⁴⁷
To represent her she has appointed Rizq al-Ghirārah.⁴⁸
'Don't let the expense bother you.' She said,
'I want a judgement made in this case of mine.'

- 18 She is filled with anger at the man who came and bought
her.
'He wants to deprive her of her warm (coat).'⁴⁹ She says,
'He terrified her—adding to her distress
By treating her as if she were a servant girl.'⁵⁰

- 19 They said to her, 'How comes it you are so grieved?
Why ever did you not let us know at the time?
You've publicly exposed us before the whole town,
You have shamed us in front of the farm-folk.'

- 20 'Mine is an astonishing tale,' said she,
'How shall I rest when I'm a stranger
And my children are lambs in the pen?

39 Babylon is famous for the angels Hārūt and Mārūt who taught men sorcery.

40 *Nadārah*, explained as *muḍaḥḥakāt*, things to be laughed at, but *nidr* means joking, fun, and indeed this poem is one which *yindir* 'ala 'l-shāh, makes fun of the ewe.

41 Animals sold for the Feast are henna-ed (*maḥannāyah*), a gay orange colour.

42 Uncertain.

43 Hadiyyah is a well known singer.

44 *Qulāz*, thought to be Turkish, explained as *ḥalazini*, spiral.

45 *Rabā'ah* is expalined as '*nurabbi-hā bi-l-nuṣṣ*'/l-thulth, we rear (the animal) sharing half and half/two thirds and one third in the cost'. This seems to be common, as for instance also between Jews and Arabs, see p.170b. In this case it is a specific agreement so as to have an animal for the Feast.

46 A complete man who *yaqūm bi-hājāt al-bint kāmīl-an*.

47 The name may be fanciful, but Maydān al-Sharārah is in Bir al-'Azab.

48 Rizq al-Ghirārah, lit., provender in the grain-sack, looks like a comic invention.

49 *Yikhallis-hā dafā-hā*, lit., to pluck away her warmth, but the sheepskin lined coat of northern Yemenis is meant. *Akhlis thiyaḥ-ak*, take off your clothes.

50 A *baziyyah* (pl., *bazāyā*) a married woman servant working from morning to sunset; she eats with the family and receives a wage. She would be of the poor of Şan'ā. (In tribal areas perhaps a woman with no husband to support her.) In Şan'ā it might also be a girl ('*azabah*) unmarried with none to support her, living as one of the family. *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 295, no. 855, has a proverb, '*Al-baziyyah tuqul al-bayt bayta-nā*. The serving girl (boasts to others) that (her master's) house is ours.'—It is used of boasting of something one does not possess. No. 856 is of a *baziyyah* who works so hard

Talk it over together, have pity, you who aid (the
defenceless).'⁵¹

- 21 The Shaykh rose, and the Headman summoned her,
Told the guard⁵² who had charge to go with her,
She should seek recourse to the Best of Creation, Ṭaḥā,
Who delivers us from awkwardnesses and evil.⁵³

* * *

A tale that illustrates a little of the practice of slaughtering at the Feast is recounted by Qāḍī Ismā'il.⁵⁴ A man bought a beast to slaughter for the Feast. He commissioned a butcher to kill it, telling him to say, 'Bismillāh, Allāhumma, this is on behalf of so and so', naming himself as the donor. The butcher however, instead of naming him, mentioned his own name. So the owner of the beast said to him, 'round off your killing of it with, "And God knows best who the person is that paid the money (*Allāh a'lam bi-naqqād im-fulūs*)"'

viii The *ḡabbānah*: *Ṣalāt al-Istisqā'*

It is a custom generally in the Yemen to go outside the city to an open place to pray at the two Feast-times. The *Ṣalāt al-Id* prayer takes place at the Şan'ā *ḡabbānah* mosque before first light (*al-shurūq*). In Imām Yaḥyā's time it was still in open country but now it is surrounded by houses.

Another important occasion upon which they repair to the *ḡabbānah* is at the *istisqā'* or prayer for rain at the periodic droughts. An older rite almost certainly pre-Islamic and ancestor to the Muslim *istisqā'* is the *tasqiyah* described by Rossi⁵⁵ and the writer. In some places in South Yemen I have remarked that the villagers go out to the wadi-bed for the *istisqā'*. A story⁵⁶ is told that a year of drought befell Şan'ā and the Governor (*wālī*) ordered the people to go out and pray for rain (*yastasqūn*). So the Muslims went to the *ḡabbānah* and the Jews went out to the area to the west. The distress caused by the drought went on for a long time so the Governor commanded the Jews to go out along with the Muslims, and follow them in whatever they said. The Muslims were shouting, '*Bi-Muḥammadin yā Allāh, minna 'alay-nā bi-l-amṭār*, By Muḥammad O God grant us rain!' The Jews kept turning round to the rear, speaking to one another secretly and they said, 'We should say, "And the Muslims are shouting 'By Muḥammad O God'." "We should say, "(and they are shouting), 'By 'Alī O God'." etcetera.' The intention of the Jews is of course to avoid uttering the oath by the Prophet of Islam. The formula is used first with the oath by Muḥammad, then 'Alī, then al-Zahrā' (Fāṭimah), but does not go on to mention al-Sibtayn, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. On the other hand all five are mentioned in the formulae used by mourners at *al-miqbār*, which is a term covering a funeral 'from the Jāmi' to the grave'.

she has no time to attend to herself.

51 *Ahl al-ḡamiyyah* = *ahl al-ḡhayrah aw ahl al-najdah*—they *yantaṣifū lahā*, try to obtain justice for her.

52 A *mustalim* is a guard (*ḡaris*) of any sort, e.g. *al-ḡaris alladhī yastalim al-Qaṣr*, the sentry who guards the Qaṣr. They speak of a *mustalim dā'im* and a *mustalim dawri*, sentry guard and patrol guard.

53 The poem has many curious words and expressions: *yiṣāl* = *yūṣāl tijwāb*, flat roof; *'āni* = *qaṣd-an*, on purpose; *daghmar* = *ittajaha*, set out; *ṣalā*, towards; *muṣarrīf* = *bārid*, cold (cf al-Rāzī, op. cit., *al-ṣard* in Şan'ā means *al-jalid* from Persian); *yargān*, Turkish lined coat; *kanābil*, blankets; *qalfadah* (pl., *qalfāfid*) = *awāni*, vessels; *ma'sharah* (pl., *ma'ashir*) tray; *tanjarah* (pl., *tanājir*), Turkish, copper vessel; *ja'alah* = *ḡalāwa* 'l-Id, Feast sweetmeats; *qaba'a* = *awjāda*; *kirs* = *zaribah*, stall for animal; *wakkafa* = *aḡdara*, bring; *makrād* (pl., *makārid*), dish; *mawqūd* (pl., *mawāqūd*), brazier; *lā 'alāwā* = *ilā a'lā*; *muwadda*, covered/decorated with cowrie shells; *tawālāf* = *tajammā'a*; *tuṭṭan* = *ḡaraba* 'l-'ūd; *tifirris* = *tanabba'a bi-mā ḡadath*, to have a presentiment of what has happened; *ṭannan* = *iḡtār*, be distracted; *balsas*, to fall silent; *mudaghbas* = *ma'an*, full, plump; *masra'* = *mā asra'*; *tahaylā* = *istahsanah*, approve, find beautiful; *absara*, see; *sakarbil*, shoes; *shiqārah*, cigarettes; *mawla'iyyah*, addiction; *muṣṣarayāt*, exact sense unknown to the Yemenis who read this with me; *bizz* (pl., *abzāz*), teats (Wehr); *qūzī* (pl., *qawāzī*), lamb (Turkish); *shiyār* is a plural of *shāh*, ewe.

54 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 220, no. 620.

55 *L'Arabo parlato*, 187; Arabian Studies, I, 32, with sung prayer texts.

56 *Al-'Izzī Ṣāliḥ al-Sinaydār*, *Amthāl Yamaniyyah*, Aden, 18, vi, 61, II, 15.

ix The Administration and Maintenance of a Mosque

Mosques are maintained from the income of the various *waqfs* which were administered by the Nāzīr al-Awqāf or Inspector, and today by the Wazīr al-Awqāf with a budget separate from that of the state—in effect the office is the same. Zaydī Imāms before the second Ottoman occupation⁵⁷ seem to have appointed to this office and al-Mahdī 'Abbās for instance maintained that control of the *zakāt al-waqf* was his prerogative.⁵⁸ The Nāzīr before his day used to receive a commission (*'amālah*) of one tenth, but al-Mahdī reduced this to two thirds of a tenth and when he offered the appointment to Sayyid 'Alī 'Āmir⁵⁹ he offered him only half of the tenth (a twentieth) but the Sayyid refused to accept anything but the full tenth which was the 'recognised commission'. Imām Yahyā Ḥamid al-Dīn in taking over from the Ottomans continued to appoint to the Inspectorate of Waqfs. The post of *ṭā'ifī* in charge of *ṭiyāfat al-waqf fi Shu'ub Ṣan'ā'* in the present century is mentioned by Zabārah⁶⁰—he seems to have been a sort of assessor like the *muthammin* or *mukharriṣ* sent out by the Government to assess crops for taxation purposes. On behalf of the Awqāf the Nāzīr looks after the lands (*arāḍī*) and *jawāmi'*, including of course the large *waqf* holdings in Ṣan'ā' itself.⁶¹

How little reputation the inspectors had for honesty is shown by Qāḍī 'Alī Abu 'l-Rijāl's censure,⁶²

Wa-lā tada 'awqāfa-nā li-nāzīr-in
Yaṣrifu-hā fi 'l-farshi li-'l-manāzīri.

Fa-dāru-hu qad ṣara bi-'l-qāḍāḍī
Muntaẓim-an bi-raqhmi kullī qāḍī.

Don't leave our *waqfs* to an inspector
Who will spend on the furnishings of (his own) belvedere.

And, with concrete, his house will be
Well appointed, despite any *qāḍī*.

The intendant of the mosque is known as the *sinaydār* (pl., *sanādirah*)—the importance of the office in the Ṣan'ā' Jāmi' is naturally far greater than in a small country mosque—as, for instance, in Ghaymān where we found the *sinaydār* whitewashing the walls. The present *sinaydār* of the Jāmi' is Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Akwa' (of the Akwa' Ṣan'ā'), who was appointed in the reign of Imām Aḥmad—this Bayt al-Akwa' are muezzins and the *sadanat al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr*. It is interesting that this pre-Islamic term *sādin*⁶³ is in present day use still and to be found in the documents relating to *waqf*. Al-Akwa' also acts as the *khaṭīb*. The *sinaydār* of a mosque usually performs the call to prayer, but he does not conduct the prayer—he stands behind the imām, and pronounces the *iqāmat al-ṣalāh*, the commencement of the prayer. In the Jāmi' Ṣan'ā' there are two muezzins, one in the *muqaddam* or northern hall, who used to stand on the *muballigh*, a large wooden platform there, since pulled down, and the other in the *mu'akhhkar* or southern hall, because of the great size of the Jāmi' which on Fridays fills to capacity. The muezzin is also usually the *musabbih*.⁶⁴ The *sinaydār* also opens the mosque doors and oversees the cleaning of the building, making sure that the *qashshām* is keeping the ablution-places properly supplied with water—if the *qashshām* is

not working properly the *sinaydār* complains to the *nāzīr*. In a small mosque the *sinaydār* might do the sweeping. In general he is responsible for guarding the mosque and his house will be close to it.

To the *sinaydār* the *nāzīr* would issue the monthly supplies (*maṣrūf al-shahr*), oil (*salīt*), paraffin for the lamps (*qāz li-'l-lambāt*), wicks (*al-dhabā'il*), candles (*al-sham'*) and his 'measure' (*al-kaylah*⁶⁵ *ḥaqq-ah*) usually grain (*ḥubūb*), rarely cash. Since this was so small allowance for their office they would have other occupations especially weaving (*ḥiyākah*) and they would spin (*yaghzilūn al-fīlah*, also called *barm al-fīlah*) and work at *mi'ṭarah*⁶⁶ (as druggists)—both being regarded as respectable (*'amal sharīf*). The *sinaydār* was of humble standing monetarily (*mutawāḍi' māliyy-an*) but he had to have virtue and religion (*ṣaḍl wa-diyānah*). They mostly held their office by inheritance.

They would of course report to the *nāzīr* when anything in the mosque required repair or renewal, but it is to be remarked that when the mosque is in need of new carpets these are generally asked for, and given to it as gifts. Mosque furniture included large alabaster lamps from Ghirās, Ṣa'dah or Radā', the *ṣirāj* of 'Aṣir stone also—sometimes very large lamps which were given as *waqfs*, they might be nearly two feet in diameter and had a wick (*fatīlah*) in each incision so that they gave a fine light. Three-branched copper candle-holders were on show at the City of Ṣan'ā' Exhibition, London, 1976-8. The large lamps were used at marriages (*yazuffū bi-hā*). Apart from this there would be *kursiyyis* to hold an open Qur'ān, cupboards for books and sometimes chests of drawers.

The *qashshām* is so called because he grows *qushmī* (known in other parts of the north as *fiḷ* but not in Ṣan'ā'), the big white radish in the mosque vegetable garden called *miqshāmah* but he also grows *bay'ah*-leeks, *buṣṭalah* a red onion with much hotness (*fahḥah*) and an onion called *barāṣah* which is not very hot. His crop is entirely his own to dispose of unless there should happen to be, under some conditions, part to be paid towards the upkeep of the mosque, so he sells his produce on his own account. A small house beside the mosque, *bayt al-qashshām*, is *milk al-waqf*, *waqf* property. Basically his duty was to convey water to the mosque and release it on the vegetable garden at the end of the day (*yinquḷ al-miyāh ila 'l-masjid wa-yifjar al-mā ila 'l-miqshāmah ākhir al-yawm*). He used to draw the water trotting down the long inclined plane of the well-ramp (*mirna'*) for the ablution places. There are some big *mirna's* near Bāb al-Yaman, not used nowadays of course, because the mechanical pump has entirely replaced human and animal labour. Rossi⁶⁸ has an example of verses sung by the *sānī* or well-worker, and probably also by the *qashshām*. If the garden is large enough the *qashshām* receives no pay for his water-drawing, if it is small he receives *kaylah* of grain, always a specified quantity, to make up the difference.

Though the *qashshām* belongs to the Bani 'l-Khums class, probably because he works with ablution-water which is not clean, today he has become very prosperous because of the current high price of vegetables, and sometimes even owns a lorry or two. During the siege of Ṣan'ā' in 1323/1905 which coincided with a famine in the Yemen when it is said that more than half of the inhabitants of the city died, there were only about twenty of

57 During the first Ottoman occupation also the Governor appointed to religious office. *Ṭabaq al-halwā*, 44 b, records the decease of a Sayyid nominated by the Pasha to Masjid al-Shahidayn to whom he allotted the crop/revenue (*ghallah*) of Bir al-Shahidayn—when the Sayyid died the *waqf* inspector seized it back.

58 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 152.

59 Ibid, 263. In 1190/1776, Imām al-Manṣūr 'Alī dismissed this Sayyid and made Qāḍī 'Alī b. Ḥasan al-Akwa' inspector, because the latter had built a mosque known as Masjid al-Hādī (Masjid al-Ḥurqān (*Masājid*, 48)) which he wanted to enter in the general *waqf* register (*al-miswaddat al-'ammah*) but 'Alī 'Āmir, in his capacity as inspector, refused, demanding that al-Akwa' make a *waqf* for the mosque (from his own resources?) that would provide its requirements in the way of carpets, lamps, wages of the intendant, water-drawer and the imām of the mosque (*al-firāsh wa-'l-qanādīl wa-ujrat al-sādin wa-'l-sānī wa-'l-qā'im bi-hi*).

60 Ibid, II, 408.

61 Al-Musaqqafāt, the shops (*al-ḥawānīt wa-'l-dakākin*) near the Jāmi', are *waqf* to it, paying monthly rents.

62 Ibid, II, 237. Cf. II, 401, for a Sayyid in charge of the Awqāf Ṣan'ā' in the early 12th/18th century who took only very little from the *waqf* revenue and maintained (*'ammara*) the mosques of the city.

63 *Sādin* is the correct name for the office, *sinaydār* being merely a local term.

64 See p. 310b.

65 *Kaylah* (as in *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 711) is a commonly applied in all south west Arabia to an allowance or payment basically in grain.

66 *Mi'ṭarah*, 'perfumery', has come to cover a much wider range of goods. Cf. *Qānūn Ṣan'ā'*, section, 6.

67 *Mirna'*, Ḥaḍramī *maqūd*. A *manza'ah* is a small hand draw-well in a house. Cf. *Masājid*, 51, *bir manza'ah sabīl*. *Yinza' al-sabīl* means to draw water from the *sabīl* well.

68 Op. cit., 103.

the well-workers (*sunāh*), 'who in the Yemen are called *qushshām*', left, and all those found there today are new. The Jāmi' had thirty *qashshāms*, but only five children survived, their fathers having perished during the siege.⁶⁹

A jingle runs,
Nizilt Wādī 'l-Shām I came down to al-Shām valley,
Liqt qashshām I met a *qashshām*,
Hazari⁷⁰ qushmī I snatched radishes (from him),
Hāzar bi-kummi He snatched at my sleeve.

The *qashshām* is not going to let anyone take his vegetables from him by force!

In 1976 the Ministry of Awqāf reported its work⁷¹ in conservation, repair, and replacement of a large number of carpets in the mosques and *jawāmi'* in many provinces, the capital being foremost. It also had undertaken the listing, and enumeration of all the real estate (*'aqārāt*) and the *musaqqafāt* of the Awqāf in the principal towns, including the capital, the defining of their rents and entering them in large registers (*siyillāt*), regularising them quarter by quarter (*hārah*), market by market, and raising the rents to double (*ad'āf*) what they were previously.

x Mosque Teachers and Scholars

The *nāzir* would also provide the stipend for the Imām who conducts the prayer and is known as Imām mihrāb Ṣan'ā', or the ordinary Imām al-masjid. *Kaylah* in fixed amount would be given him and the muezzin, in accordance with circumstances. The Jāmi' is of course where instruction is given in the wide field of 'ilm, the religious sciences, and most scholars teach without any other reward than gifts from pupils.⁷² Some needy scholars (*fuqahā' muhtājīn*) may however receive *kaylah*. The present *muqri 'l-Jāmi' al-Kabīr*, Sayda-nā Muḥammad 'Āmir,⁷³ reads the Qur'ān before the Ṣalāt al-Fajr in Ramaḍān and before the Ṣalāt al-Jumū'ah, and at all times. He also acts as a *nashshād* (*yunshid*)⁷⁴ at weddings and funerals (*al-afrāḥ wa-'l-amwāt*).

Zabārah⁷⁵ poses the question, 'Who is called *faqīh*?' 'What is intended by *fiqh* is not merely knowledge of the tenets of the founder of the rite/school (*aqwāl Ṣāhib al-madhhab*). It is indeed the analogical deduction (*istinbāṭ*) of the *shar'ī* laws (*aḥkām*) from clear proofs (*adillah taḥṣīliyyah*) the person engaged in which is not called *faqīh* until he becomes a master (imām) in all the transmitted sciences (*al-'ulūm al-naqliyyah*) such as Arabic, the *Uṣūl*, *Ḥadīth*, Qur'ān Commentary (*tafsīr*) and what is connected with this, in addition to the essentials of the science of Scholastic Theology (*Kalām*).'

Of course the term *faqīh* is applied in practice to a wide range of persons from the outstanding scholar to the village dominie whose learning is not very deep. It is said that the Qādī class at one time were simply known as *fuqahā'*. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Shāmī says that Sayyid scholars would teach in the mosque in the early morning, gratis, then leave and engage in embroidering caps (*taṭrīz al-kawāfi*), after which they would go and chew *qāt* (*yukhazzin*). Even al-Manṣūr the ancestor of the Ḥamīd al-Dīn Imāms used at one time to work at this in a narrow lane in Ṣan'ā', and al-Shāmī himself can do so, though he says he is not very expert at it. The best *kawāfi* come because of this from the Ahnūm and Shahārah districts where there are Sayyids who practise the embroidery craft (*mihnat al-taṭrīz*), making the caps

known as *ma'raqah* (pl., *ma'ariq*). The Qudāh used to ply the craft of binding books (*ḥabak, yaḥbuk*) and indeed an Ahnūmī *qādī* is recorded by Zabārah⁷⁶ as 'eating by the toil of his hand at repairing and binding books' (early 12th/18th century). Some Sayyids also bound books. After teaching at the mosque in the early morning one would see Sayyids and others of standing going off with their large turbans and bundle of books to work as carpenters and blacksmiths—this in no way was considered as demeaning them.

The big teaching mosques like the Jāmi' of Ṣan'ā' have a row of cells for students who are known in the Yemen as *muhājirīn*. They seem generally to exist on charity from individuals, mostly in the form of food, but they do not receive anything from the Awqāf. One of these however who used to teach (*yūqri*) and live in the Ṣan'ā' Jāmi', is recorded as receiving something from the *zakāt* and Awqāf.⁷⁷

xi 'Ilm, Religious Learning

In the northern part of the Yemen the study year—the academic year—is six months from Muḥarram to Jumād I.⁷⁸ The Zaydīs study *al-Farā'id* (laws of inheritance) during Rajab over approximately 26 days, each with its specified period (*ḥiṣṣah mu'ayyanah*) until completed.⁷⁹ The Shāfi'īs in the Tihāmāh however study during Rajab, *al-Ummahāt al-Sitt*, the 'Six Books' of Tradition, especially al-Bukhārī whose *Ṣaḥīḥ* has in their eyes most virtue (*tabarruk*). Sha'bān and Ramaḍān are a holiday period, but Ramaḍān is a vacation for worship (*ijāzah 'ibādah*). After 'Id al-Fiṭr on the 5th Shawwāl a study period commences, continuing to Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, known as the study period between the small and great feasts (*Dirāsāt bayn al-'Idayn*).

A sample of the course of studies followed by an 'alim in Ṣan'ā' in the first half of the 12th/18th century and probably similar to other scholars even up to the present day is that of 'Abdullāh Luṭf al-Bārī al-Kibsi⁸⁰ which include *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī, *Sharḥ al-Raḍiyy*, and some of *al-Ummahāt al-Sitt*. Before he was twenty he had completed grammar, syntax and rhetoric (*bayān*). He then went on to study the *Uṣūlīs* (see *EI*, *uṣūl*), logic, *fiqh*, *ḥadīth* and Qur'ān commentary. After completing reading the *'ulūm al-ijtihād*, he occupied himself with learning the Qur'ān by heart, and the Seven Readings (of the Qur'ān) with the Shaykh al-Qurrā—no doubt in the Jāmi'.

The Shaykh al-Qur'ān,⁸¹ the same as Shaykh al-Qurrā, specialises in the Seven Readings in *Tajwīd* of Qur'ān Recitation, the Zaydīs using the reading of Nāfi', but that of Ḥafṣ is also known.

Ordinarily the mosques are open from before daybreak (*waqt al-saḥūr*) till 3 a.m. (Arab time = 9 p.m.) being closed after Ṣalāt al-Ashā, but some remain open if they are teaching mosques—one door of the Jāmi' on the east side remains open all the time.

xii Al-Masmūrah and al-Manqūrah

Al-Wāsi'ī⁸² tells us that 'It has been said that in the rear hall (*mu'akkhar*) of the Jāmi' there is one of the gardens of Paradise, it being the (area) known today commonly held (to lie) between al-Masmūrah and al-Manqūrah; it is bounded by four columns with the *mihrāb* of the rear hall of the Jāmi' in the middle. It is

69 Al-Wāsi'ī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman*, 2nd ed., 303—he was writing in 1927.

70 *Hazar, yahzir*, to snatch. Al-'Izzī Ṣāliḥ al-Ṣinaydār, *Amthāl Yamaniyyah*, II, Aden (?), 18, vi, 61, quotes a proverb, *Qashshām Ṣan'ā' wa-lā shaykh al-bilād*, the sense of which is that the life of a poor townsman (*madani*) is better than that of a rich man who is a *badawi*. The Jews have the same proverb but for *shaykh* they substitute *mōri*.

71 YAR Ministry of Information, *al-Kitāb al-sanawī*, 1976, 175.

72 Al-Mahdī 'Abbās is recorded as ordering the prayer (*ṣalāh*) to be taught in Ṣan'ā' and the villages and countryside (*bawādī*) and he gave the teachers a stipend (*jirāyah*) from the Bayt al-Māl (*Nashr al-'arf*, II, 519).

73 A man of this type would be called *faqīh* in the restricted sense that he would know the Qur'ān by heart and various *anāshid nabawiyyah*, etc.

74 See p.533b (n), 561b.

75 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 483.

76 Ibid, II, 159 Ibid, II, 274, notes a Ṣan'ā' *faqīh* who worked as a merchant till he lost his capital.

77 Ibid, II, 217.

78 This form is used for Jumādā.

79 It was a custom with scholars reading a text when they decided to stop at a point which they would later resume, to say, *Ilā hunā wa-nazid, wa-bi-'llāh al-tawfiq*.

80 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 143.

81 Cf. *Masājīd Ṣan'ā'*, 36. *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 408, records a blind *shaykh al-qirā'āt al-sab'* in the present century.

82 *Al-Badr al-muzil li-'l-ḥuzn*, Cairo, 1358, 12.

commonly known to people through experience that anyone who swears a false oath (*yamin-an fajirat-an*) by God Exalted at this place will not remain three days before being struck by leprosy (*judhām*), or the falling off of his arms and legs, or a great disease in his organs. Al-Masmūrah is a nail (*mismār*) in a side on the right of the *mihrāb* and al-Manqūrah is a hollow in a side on the left of the *mihrāb*, to the west—and this is the original mosque which was built by the command of the Prophet. It is tried fact about this place that prayer is responded to—you see no distressed person or one weighed down by cares who sincerely addresses himself to God in this place but it is dispelled from him straightaway. You see the Ṣan'ā' people recommending one another in this place to offer prayer and study the Qur'ān. A certain person told me of himself that he was sitting alone in this place behind the *mihrāb* in the last third of the night after the opening of the Jāmi' but before people had arrived, there only being the servant (*khādim*) of the Jāmi' in some part of it. This man laid down his head to sleep, then he broke wind and a sound came from him, and he heard nothing but (received) a violent blow between his shoulders. He rose in fright to see who had struck him, but saw nobody—so he left off sitting in that place except to perform (his) devotions.'

Another tale I heard, certainly apocryphal, is that when the Prophet's Companion, Mu'adh b. Jabal came to Ṣan'ā', his camel was allowed to go on till it stopped in a Jewish garden at this spot—it was bought and made into the Jāmi'.

The way in which the oath is taken at al-Masmūrah and al-Manqūrah was described to me by Sayyid Aḥmad al-Marwanī as follows. The *muḥallif*—the person who has brought his opponent to take the oath (of denial of an offence) and the *muḥallaf*—the person persuaded to take the oath, sit between the two pillars facing the *qiblah*. If the *muḥallaf* is uncertain he trembles in fear (*yartajif*). The formula of the oath which he swears would be, '*Aqsim billāh al-ʿaẓīm al-ḥāẓīm al-nāẓīm al-jabbār al-muntaqim, qasam-an, akhruju min ḥawli 'llāh wa-quwwat-ih ilā ḥawli 'l-Shayṭān wa-quwwat-ih anni mā fa'alt kadhā, I swear by Almighty God the Crushing, Wrathful, Omnipotent, Taking Vengeance, an oath, whereby I leave God's power and might for the power and might of Satan, that I did not commit such and such.*'

If the two parties had been in court a person appointed by the judge (*ḥākim*) would attend the oath-taking, carrying a note from him which would have something like the following form. '*Ilā sinaydār al-Masjid al-Jāmi', ṣadar ilay-kum fulān al-fulānī, ma'a gharīm-ih, fulān bin fulān, li-taḥlīf al-yamīn al-Zubayriyyah, To the Intendant of the Jāmi' Mosque, so and so has come to you with his opponent, so and so, to make (him) swear the Zubayrī oath.*' The *sinaydār* will send back a note to the *ḥākim* after the oath-taking to inform him that this has been done and of the result thereof. It was suggested that the Zubayrī might refer back to 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr of the Umayyad period, but there seems to be no grounds for this—the origin of the name is lost in antiquity but it is the strongest of oaths.

An alternative procedure is for two persons to go privately, with two witnesses—who might be any bystanders in the Jāmi', or others. Perhaps a *muṣliḥ* who is sometimes the 'Aqil al-Ḥāfah (Headman of the Quarter), or else if in the Market the *muṣliḥ* would be of the merchants (*tujjār*), or the 'Aqil al-Sūq (Headman of the Market), would be with them. In point of fact it is only if they have no other persons accompanying them that they ask two persons in the Jāmi' to act as witnesses.

A man may however require his accuser to take an oath that he is not just bringing a mischievous plea (*da'wā kādhībah*) against him, attempting to injure me by means of this plea (*tajriḥi bi-hādhīhi 'l-da'wā*). You must swear that your oath was not brought to annoy me (*yamīn-ak mā ta'annatta-nī*). This oath, called *yamīn al-ʿanat* is taken when one is accused of making another swear without justification (*ḥaqq*).

With regard to oath-taking in general, the author of *al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār*⁸³ cites the Tradition that oaths may be taken '*alā minbari, on/at my minbar*'. They may be taken in mosques on account of their honour (*sharaf*) and on Qur'āns (*maṣāḥif*) on account of their sanctity (*ḥurmah*) and the swearer puts his hand on the *maṣḥaf* out of veneration (*i'ẓām-an*). 'The picking out of any particular stone is disapproved, since in this there is similarity to the idolaters (*wathaniyyūn*), as is done in the rear hall (*mu'akh-khar*) of the Jāmi' of Ṣan'ā' at the Green Stone (al-Ḥajar al-Akhḍar).' Whether this reference in the first half of the 9th/15th century is to a separate stone from these two columns is unknown to us.

In the *maqāmah* of 'Alī Ṣāliḥ Abu 'l-Rijāl, writing about the first half of the 12th/18th century, the Jāmi' Mosque is made to say, 'Don't you see that between al-Masmūrah and al-Manqūrah they have put an ugly wooden grille (*shubbāk*) only suitable for the garden of a *qashshām* or one of the cattle stables (*ṣabl min ṣubūl al-an'ām*)?' It does not seem to be there now.⁸⁴

xiii Al-Ḥajar al-Mulamlamah⁸⁵

Farwah b. Musayk, or according to other traditions, Wabr b. Yuḥannas al-Khuzā'i al-Anṣārī, or Abān b. Sa'īd, was ordered by the Prophet to build the Ṣan'ā' Masjid between al-Qal'at al-Mulamlamah to Ghumdān. A variant says between al-Akamah (the Mound) and al-Qal'at al-Mulamlamah. Some traditions call it only al-Ṣakhrah, the Rock, and some authorities place it in '*aṣl Ghumdān*', presumably the foundations of Ghumdān Palace. Only the top of this stone is showing today, but it is said to go down deep and it is suggested there may be inscriptions or carved ornament on the lower parts. No tradition is known to us to have been preserved attaching any particular sacredness to al-Mulamlamah. It is mere speculation to suggest it may have been a boundary stone, perhaps even of a sacred enclave, a place for circumambulation perhaps. If it had a sacred character before Islam the probability is that it would have been destroyed. What does not seem in doubt is that it is pre-Islamic.

xiv Al-Khafanjī's Poem on the Mosques of Ṣan'ā'

The mosques of Ṣan'ā' are treated in a lighter vein by the poetic wit, 'Alī b. Ḥasan al-Khafanjī⁸⁶ in his verses on 'Addil Mosque in Bīr al-'Azab on the Bawniyah side, not far from Bāb al-Balaqah, the Gate to the Jewish Quarter. It seems this was an old building⁸⁷ renovated by Imām al-Manṣūr (ob. 1224/1809-10), son of al-Mahdī 'Abbās. The *saqīfah* over the court (*ṣawḥ*) was built by Imām al-Mutawakkil in 1266/1849-50. The poem, composed about mid 18th century, faithfully reflects Ṣan'ānī life, the place the mosque occupies in society, and numerous little customs of the people. The name, 'Addil, of the mosque which makes a plea to the Jāmi' Mosque is curious. It is the imperative of '*addal* meaning to lay down as a pledge at a dispute of a *bunduq* or *jambiyyah*, the two contending parties being known as '*idāl*'.⁸⁸ The language is colloquial but not patois and it is attempted to convey this in fairly literal prose.

83 Op. cit., IV, 409.

84 *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 232.

85 *Ghāyat al-amānī*, 64, calls it 'al-Ḥajar al-Mulamlamah which is under the arch (*al-ṭāq*) on the left of the person facing the *qiblah* (*al-mustaqbil*)'. *Tāj*

al-'Arūs, IX, 63, defines a *ḥajar mulamlam* as *mudamlak* (smooth and round), *ṣulb* (hard) and *mustadīr* (round).

86 A descendant from Imām al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad.

87 *Masājīd*, 70.

88 I know no reason why the mosque is so called.

The plot

Al-Khafanji turns certain Ṣan'ā' mosques into personages—this mosque-poem is not a genre confined to the Yemen⁸⁹—I have come across it in Ḥaḍramawt, and doubtless it would be found frequently elsewhere in Arabic literature. Sharaf al-Dīn⁹⁰ says that all the names of mosques in Ṣan'ā' are the names of city Quarters and this may have some significance. Political satire that could endanger a poet's life and chattels is said often to have been expressed in verse and *maqāmahs* of this kind. Since no Yemeni author consulted suggests that there is a satire underlying the plain sense I can discern no ulterior motive in the verses unless it be to complain of the poverty and neglect of some Ṣan'ā' mosques and propose that part of the income of richer foundations like the wealthy Jāmi' should be diverted to renovating the poorer mosques. At the time there does appear to have been a movement to enlarge and improve older mosques of simple structure. Criticism of the inspectors of mosque *waqfs* for converting their incomes to private use there may be, but the literature shows this was so common that an honest *nāzir* might be rare.⁹¹

The Jāmi' Mosque is portrayed as a personage of great wealth and consequence—perhaps even in the role of an Imām himself? 'Addil, a poor mosque of the suburbs sends to complain to him of his neglected condition, and the Jāmi', in kindly way, consents to make him a visit of inspection.

On the Yemeni feast of the first Friday in Rajab, the Jāmi' issues forth with great pomp and circumstance from Bāb al-Yaman on the south side of the city at the head of a retinue that includes several other notable Ṣan'ā' mosques—others come running up to join the cortege—just as children do, even adults.

While the Jāmi' rests for brief refreshment, a complainant, the Nizaylī mosque, about the entrance to Bir al-'Azab, arrives with a small *douceur* for the Jāmi'—as is customary when a person wants a hearing, not a bribe. His case has presumably been dragging on for some time for the Jāmi' tells him the relevant *waqf* documents are mislaid. 'Addil, alarmed lest his own case be postponed by the business of the new complainant, now interposes. Characteristically of an approach I have heard many a time, he does not do so in his own name, but begs that the Jāmi' be allowed to take his due need of rest. Nizaylī snubs him by implying that 'Addil is not of the same category as himself and his much superior wealth. However he seems to withdraw.

The Jāmi' resumes his journey joined by yet more mosques. 'Addil now pleads his poverty asking the Jāmi' to take action about it—this he consents to do. An interruption is caused by the Ṣayyād mosque, seemingly in the role of a clerk of the Waqf, rushing up with a document and asking the Jāmi' to assist 'Addil. The Jāmi' promises to send for Ṣan'ā' building contractors. 'Addil blesses and praises the Jāmi' who goes on speaking of his arrangements.

Mu'īd mosque now tells of the visions of 'Addil's coming prosperity that he had in dreams on which he consulted an expert in interpretation of dreams at Zumur mosque. Either he or a person unnamed, perhaps the Jāmi', describes 'Addil's rosy future fulsomely and at length. The trees and birds applaud the Jāmi's decision—in their trilling there is clear allusion to the ululations of the womenfolk.

Well satisfied with a sound piece of work, the Jāmi' starts on his way back to Ṣan'ā', but again as he proceeds, this time along the north side of the city, he is confronted by further petitions from Ṣan'ā' mosques. He puts off these fresh complainants, re-enters Ṣan'ā' and is greeted by trilling cries of joy by the women of the city.

* * *

- 1 Says 'Addil, 'Wa-'l-salām, a greeting
Proffered to the Jāmi' in sincerity.'
- 2 When he arrives I'll lay the case before him.
'Addil says he's got a complaint to make,
- 3 'First let him build for me ablution-places,
Second, have them clean out⁹² the well.
- 4 The wind (chills) the foot-pool,⁹³ blowing like bellows.
I have no lamp to light me in the evening,
- 5 My east wall leans over,⁹⁴ like to fall,
God preserve it from worse ill-fortune.⁹⁵
- 6 No friend have I, none to make me known,
On this question Qārish, ask al-Ashrafiyyah!⁹⁶
- 7 If you've anything, your friend's the one on whom to
spend it.⁹⁷
Oh Jāmi', if only—when you honour me by visiting
- 8 To get to know and verify the state I'm in—
You'd favour a fellow, with your kindly face.'
- 9 The Jāmi, turning⁹⁸ to him, said, 'Why not?
Already people have acquainted me with your condition.
- 10 Assuredly! You're welcome—full willingly.
To come to Bir al-'Azab is little trouble⁹⁹ to me.'
- 11 Till the Friday of Rajab¹⁰⁰ he tarried, then, of a sudden,
came.
Out from the Wall he went,¹⁰¹ passed through the open
countryside,
- 12 On his right Madrasah and Abzar.¹⁰²
Resplendent as the moon was his appearance.
- 13 Hearing each from the other of his venture forth, the
Mosques
Came running up to join him with the still prostrate
in prayer.¹⁰³

89 For Yemeni poems on the same theme see 'Abdullāh b. Ḥusayn al-Shāmi (12th/18th century) on al-Ṣayyād Mosque and a contest between mosques, (*Nashr al-'arf*, II, 92 seq., and 224), the marriage of al-Madhab and al-Murādiyyah mosques. See al-Dhahbāni, *al-Anghām al-sha 'biyyah*, 34seq. for a political poem entitled Masjīd al-Khayr.

90 Aḥ. Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, *al-Ṭarā'if al-mukhtārah min shi'r al-Khafanji wa-'l-Qārah*, Cairo, 1970, 35.

91 While I was working on this poem in 1974 in Ṣan'ā' and, in early 1975 with Sayyid Aḥmad al-Shāmi in Beirut, I was unaware that Harald Vocke, 'Die Beschwerde der 'Addil-Moschee', ZDMG, 1973, CXIII, 56-73, had already published a text, translation and excellent commentary based on the Sharaf al-Dīn text. My versions were those in *Masājid Ṣan'ā'*, 71-73, Sharaf al-Dīn, and Sayyid Aḥmad al-Shāmi's edition, in preparation, of the *Diwān al-Khafanji*, based on a Ms. superior to either which we read in Beirut and later in London. Dr Vocke's article contains material not used here. A biography is to be found in *Nashr al-'arf*, II, 193-98. Notes here contain only significant variants. The Shāmi text does not include verses 25 and the first hemistich of 26, but has entirely different lines which have been included, numbered 26 a and b. Further verses omitted by *Masājid Ṣan'ā'* are numbered 56 a and b, and 61 a and b. The verses commencing 'The apricot-trees joyously trilled' seem to me to fit in better in the second place where they appear, but as they are aesthetically satisfying in both places they are left so.

92 *Masrat al-bir*, cleaning the well of spoil, this earth said to be good for the fields.

93 *Maṣfā* (pl., *maṣāfi*) pools where one *yitṣaffā fih*, washes the feet before entering the mosque. There are two such pools an outside (*khārijī*) pool for really dirty feet (e.g. of Bedouin!) and inside (*dākhilī*) before actual entrance to the mosque.

94 *Muḥaqqif/muḥaddif*, the latter meaning *mā'il*.

95 *Yuwaddif/muwaddif*, unlucky. Cf. *waddāf* meaning *mankūb*, distressed etc.

96 Qārish, a mosque in Bir al-'Azab (*Masājid*, 91).

Al-Ashrafiyyah is perhaps the famous mosque of Ta'izz, but no such mosque name is recorded of Ṣan'ā'. Is 'Addil trying to emphasize that his poverty is known even as far as Ta'izz?

97 *Maṣraf/maṣrif* = *makān li-'l-ṣarf*.

98 *Istafat* = *iltafat/intabahat*.

99 *Daliyyah* = *sahlah*, Cf. *Gloss. daṭ*.

100 Traditionally the day upon which the Yemen, through Hamdān, accepted Islam, a feast day. Jāmi's exit would be via Bāb al-Yaman.

101 *Ghazzār* = *aqbal*. Al-Shāmi says, *waṣal, atā fuṣū'at-an*.

102 Both mosques in north-east side of Ṣan'ā'.

103 This and the following verse mean that the mosques upped and off, carrying their congregations with them.

- 14 On went the Jāmi', bearing all worshippers with him,
Replete with learning, his bearing stately,
15 Came to al-Jurūf,¹⁰⁴ sat himself down,
Had Madhhab and Abhar¹⁰⁵ serve him with refreshment
there.
16 Up with his plaint arrived Nizaylī,¹⁰⁶ 'Aid me', he cried,
'Ya ghārātāh!'¹⁰⁷
A present he brought—a gift of seductive musk,¹⁰⁸
17 Came into his presence, flung down his mats.¹⁰⁹
Said the Jāmi', by distress¹¹⁰ affected, by sighing overcome.
18 'On you Bounteous God will cast his regard,¹¹¹ (pray
patience),
Our brother Yāqūt¹¹² has (somehow) mislaid¹¹³ the waqf
deeds.¹¹⁴
19 Said 'Addil, interposing, 'My brother, wait,
Allow the Enlightened Jāmi' to rest¹¹⁵ and listen,
20 Then speak, and there be some point to your word
Else, brother, all becomes a mob and a confusion.'¹¹⁶
21 Said Nizaylī, 'I am endowed with gifts
Of incense, cupboards for books, sweepers' wages.
22 Both plains and (mountain) short cuts¹¹⁷ have I travelled.
My ablution places are not keenly cold in winter.'
23 The Jāmi' turned, taking the road to 'Addil.
Ḥanḡal, in new clothes¹¹⁸ had come up meanwhile,
24 Qāḡī¹¹⁹ approached (to join them) at a trot,¹²⁰
And after them, Bahmah, rather more slowly.¹²¹
25 The apricot-trees joyously trilled¹²² their welcome to the
Jāmi',
26/1 To him the pear-trees waved their branches,¹²³
The cranes¹²⁴ flapped and clapped their wings.
26a 'Addil, poor fellow, was overcome with joy,¹²⁵

- From the moment his court¹²⁶ appeared, kept exclaiming,
'Power lies with God alone',
26b Eyes tense with expectation,¹²⁷ kept coming back to the
Jāmi'.
26/2 'One ounce (of lamp-oil) a week have I,' he said,
27 'Never, in my time, have I known intendant's¹²⁸ (care),
Nor ever (spared) they two hot coals¹²⁹ to warm me,
28 But if no waqf I have, you are yet Protector to me,
Since, oh mighty Lord, you remain my sole resource!¹³⁰
29 The Jāmi' replying to him said, 'Be of good cheer.
We must attend to you, see to your case,
30 Mend those parts of you in disrepair, re-build them.
You and I will split the catch-crop when it comes in,¹³¹
31 Carpets I'll give you from my northern wing.¹³²
This carpet, no-one can deny, is done.
32 You, my lad, are foremost in my mind,
Yes, by the Prophet, you're in a sorry plight.'
33 Up came Ṣayyād,¹³³ in his haste¹³⁴ without belt and
dagger,¹³⁵
Running all distraught from the door of Ḥanḡal,
34 A long sheet of paper, gummed,¹³⁶ in his hand,
A fair copy wherein were matters set forth clearly.
35 Greeting the Jāmi', he went on to say, 'Listen,
This poor fellow needs you—he is destitute.¹³⁷
36 If you can spare something and be generous¹³⁸
Will you from your surplus, spare him just a little?'¹³⁹
37 The Jāmi' made reply most satisfactory,
'In the past', said he, 'I've been neglectful of you.
38 I shall send to Qaṣ'ah, and I'll get al-Ḥifāfī¹⁴⁰
To estimate what you'll have to pay in men's wages.'¹⁴¹
39 Up rose 'Addil, responding with a blessing (on him),
'May the Lord guard you¹⁴² from the glances of the evil.

104 Al-Jurūf is unknown to al-Shāmi but the context shows it would be on the west side of Ṣan'ā', perhaps near the Nizaylī mosque (verse 16). *Qanbar*, to sit.
105 The Madhhab and Abhar mosques, east and west of the Jāmi' respectively, are represented as attendants.
106 A mosque at the east wall of Bīr al-'Azab.
107 *Ghawwar* = to say 'Ya ghārātāh'. Cf. E. V. Stace, *English-Arabic vocabulary*, London, 1893, *ghawwar* 'alaya, he came to my help; *Gloss. dat.*, 2384.
108 Shāmi's Ms. reads, *W'iddā min al-ward al-janiyy*, And gave cut roses.
109 *Khabaṭ* = throw down. This is a sign of the bitterness of his complaint (*marārat al-shakwah*) and asking for aid (*istinjād*) when one is in bad circumstances. When a man is frustrated in such a case he will often snatch off his turban and throw it at someone's feet.
110 *Ghathā* = 'alam, pain, *ghāthi* = *muta'allim*, in pain. Cf. *Gloss. dat.*, 2357, *ghathi*, être ennuyé de, degouté de.
111 *Naḡrah* means *uṣbur*, be patient, and God will look to (*naḡara*) your case.
112 Yāqūt is the Naḡir al-Waqf.
113 *Ghaṭṭas* = *ḡayya*.
114 *Waḡiyyah*, the mosque's *waḡyā* al-*awqaf*, bequests.
115 *Ifṭāḡ*, to take one's rest—in Ṣan'āni dialect *fihnah* = *rāḡah*. Cf. *Gloss. dat.*, 2440; Rossi, 233; Stace, 200.
116 *Daḡ* (from *fawḡā*)—*hawshaliyyah*. One speaks of *al-bar'ah al-hawshaliyyah* which is explained as follows. Tribes dancing the *bar'ah/bara'* to drums alone, have each its own style of dance, and at a gathering each tribe in turn will perform its own *bara'* with daggers drawn. Then at the end, it will be said, *Wa-l-'ān hawshaliyyah*, and each will dance his own tribal style of dance at the same time as the rest—hence the sense of 'confusion'. Only the *raqs* (with clapping of hands) has the accompaniment of the *mizmār* pipes. 'Addil at this point fears the situation may turn into chaos if they do not weigh their words before the Jāmi'.
117 *Maḡarīb* (sing. *muḡribah*), a short cut; *Gloss. dat.*, 2471, *maḡrabah* = raccourci. Perhaps it only means a mountain track here.
118 Wearing new clothes because it is a Feast day. *Mibaddil*, wearing a new *badlah*.
119 Ḥanḡal and to the west of it, Masjid al-Qāḡī are in the northern sector of Bīr al-'Azab, Bahmah in the southern sector. *Khafanji* means that all the Bīr al-'Azab mosques hasten to meet him in their new clothing for the Feast. Perhaps Bahmah comes more slowly because *bahmah* means a calf!
120 *Miharwil/biyihdhil* (Shāmi), walk quickly.
121 *Iḡtī* = *ta'akkhar*. One says, *Al-maliḡ yibḡi*, nice things take a long time in coming.
122 *Aḡjarat*, she made the *zaghūrūḡah*, the ululation of women in welcoming or on a joyous or sad occasion. Cf. *Gloss. dat.*, 358.
123 *Mizraq* in class. Arabic means a javelin—possibly the image is of warriors waving their spears?

124 The *ghirnāḡ* (pl., *gharāniḡ*) is identified by Mr G. C. Pope of the Centre for Overseas Pest Research as the cattle egret. There are no *gharāniḡ* in Bīr al-'Azab at the present day, but this shows that there was much water in Bīr al-'Azab then, as indeed living memory today asserts there was.
125 *Mushabḡiq* = *masrūr*. Shāmi reads *quḡūh mushabḡiq* which he says is *muntazir fi shawḡ shadīd*, awaiting avidly as when a child wants sweets or a cat wants a mouse!
126 *Ṣawḡḡ*, means the courtyard.
127 *Yuharriḡ/muhaddiq*. *Yuharriḡ* means burning with sadness, e.g. '*Ru'yat-uh tuharriḡ al-qalb*, The sight of him upsets me,' This would be said of seeing someone ill or afflicted. *Muhaddiq* would mean fixing one's eyes on, to eye keenly.
128 *Sinaydār*.
129 *Kizḡah nār*, syn. *jamrah*, a hot coal. Cf. *Gloss. dat.*, *kazza bi-l-nār*, mettre feu à.
130 *Bagiyyah* expl. as *al-marja' al-waḡid*.
131 Shāmi's text reads for the *akhir al-'ashiyah* of the *Masājid*, *kaffat al-naḡiyyah*. Sharaf al-Dīn reads *marwaḡ al-naḡiyyah* which has been adopted here, meaning *mawṣim al-ḡaṣād*. *Naḡiyyah* is an unexpected crop resulting from a sudden rain, therefore a lucky surplus. The poet means '*nu'ḡik min al-faḡl*, we (i.e. the Jāmi') shall give you from our surplus.'
132 *Arabic muḡaddam*, a play on words with *muḡaddam* in the next verse meaning 'dear to, preferred', translated as 'foremost'.
133 Al-Ṣayyād mosque in Bīr al-'Azab (*Masājid*, 62). It is regarded as the mosque of the 'Alī al-Wazīr Sayyids, being surrounded by Al Wazīr houses.
134 *Yihiff* = *yijri*, *Gloss. dat.*, 2874, *marcher vite*.
135 *Misri* = *bi-dūn ḡizām wa-janbiyyah*. This means that he is only semi-dressed.
136 *Maghrī*, gummed.
137 *Aḡṭā* = *maḡṭū* 'an *manṣa'*, *maḡṭū* min *rizq*, having nothing to support him.
138 Sharaf al-Dīn reads for the first hemistich, *In fika shī li-'llāh*. . . Cf. *Waṣalnā 'ind al-Nabiyy wa-ḡulnā*, '*Yā shay li-'llāh*', which means '*yā ma'ūnat Allāh*, help/charity from God'. There is said to be an allusion to a Tradition (*Ḥadīth*) here, but of course one does say, *Allāh mutawassi' alā* . . . etc.
139 *Kadhiyyah*, a little. *Faḡlat al-masjid* means *fā'id dakhli-hi*, the surplus of its income.
140 Bayt Qaṣ'ah is the most famous family of builders and architects of Ṣan'ā', an *israh mashhūrah*, well-known family, master builders (*asāfi*). They live in al-Sā'ilah Quarter. Many places in modern times have been built by them; they built the minaret (*ṣawma'ah*) of al-Quzālī. Al-Ḥifāfī are also notable builders.
141 *Shaqiyyah*, expl. as *takālīf* here.
142 *Tāḡā 'alayk rabbi* is explained that if someone is in need (*muḡṭāj*) you say, '*Tāḡā 'alayk, Allāh yitāḡi 'alayk*, May God save you.' Or you may say, '*tahjab 'alayk*, cover you over' (so that no evil person may see you). *Taqiyyah* comes from the same root.

- 40 With these words of yours you have relieved¹⁴³ my heart,
For you are of those versed in the law,¹⁴⁴ sensitive of
their honour.'
- 41 The Jāmi' turned to him, said laughingly,
'A splendid thing to have relieved your heart!
- 42 Negotiations to pave¹⁴⁵ your court with someone I've
begun already,
And to extend it westwards of the building,¹⁴⁶
- 43 Since you are needy and must have more revenue.
Your prayer-niche is tinier than a leather bag!
- 44 They say that worship in you is acceptable (to God),¹⁴⁷
Yet no (*waqf*) do you own of land, or hostelry.¹⁴⁸
- 45 Said Mu'īd,¹⁴⁹ 'I saw good fortune for you in a dream,
That you were standing¹⁵⁰ beside the door of Abū Ṭayr¹⁵¹
- 46 When Abu 'l-Khayr¹⁵² stopped in your prayer-niche
And the minaret that belongs to you was like Khuwarnaq.¹⁵³
- 47 On waking, I betook myself to the dream-interpreter,
And there was al-Yazīdī¹⁵⁴ sitting in Zumur¹⁵⁵—
- 48 A *faqīh* who knows all things have One who disposes¹⁵⁶—
Compared with him Ibn Sīrīn¹⁵⁷ doesn't come up to here!¹⁵⁸
- 49 To him I said, 'I've seen a vision
That 'Addil has come into conjunction with the Pleiades,¹⁵⁹
- 50 That he is full set for fortune
And has courts like those built by 'Āmir'.¹⁶⁰
- 51 Said (the Jāmi'), 'This is the best of the things you've seen.
If what you say be realised you have (indeed) (re-)built
him,¹⁶¹
- 52 Summoned him to well-being and prosperity.
Favourable¹⁶² regard must be accorded him.
- 53 His position¹⁶³ is beside the Enlightened (Jāmi').
He must receive favourable consideration, be re-furbished,
- 54 His prayer-niche decorated with green *lāz*,¹⁶⁴
He must be transformed into a veritable Jāmi' of the Banū
Umayyah!¹⁶⁵
- 55 He must have the field of 'Iyāl Jassār,¹⁶⁶
In which they'll plant onions and (fruit) trees.

- 143 *Shafayt/ghadhayt* (Shāmi and Sharaf al-Dīn). The variant means literally, 'You have nourished', but the sense is *araḥt*, eased, relieved.
- 144 *Al-'urf wa-l-ḥamiyyah*—this is 'urf recognised by *sharī'ah*, *taqāfid*, traditional practices of trading, tribes, etc.
- 145 *Yaṣull* = to make *ṣalal*, paving stones of *al-ḥabash al-abyaḍ*, white *ḥabash* stone which is weak, not like black *ḥabash*.
- 146 Al-Baniyyah of the mosque is *al-haram al-masqūf*, the roofed part of the sacred area. One says *ṣawḥ al-jāmi' wa-baniyyat-uh*, the court and building of the Jāmi'.
- 147 This must mean that 'Addil is one of the *masājīd mubārakah*, i.e., *al-mustajābah al-da'awāt*, prayers in which are answered—which is a *ḍalīl 'alā ṣalāh alladhī banā-hā*, an indication of the piety of him who built it.
- 148 *Samsarahs*, hostleries, are commonly set up as *waqf*-property producing revenue. *Tikiyyah* is said to be Turkish (though it is not so in this sense), but to have come to mean a *miḥyāyah*-café or *samsarah*, *al-dakhil ḥaqqā-hā li-l-waqf*.
- 149 Mu'īd is a person unknown, unless possibly he is the policeman more or less contemporary with al-Khafanji (*Nashr al-'arf*, II, 752).
- 150 *Misannib* = *qā'im/waqi'*.
- 151 Abu 'l-Ṭayr is Masjid Ibn al-Ḥusayn Abu 'l-Ṭayr (*Masājīd*, 4).
- 152 Abu 'l-Khayr seems unknown. Shāmi suggested a bird or pious man!
- 153 The palace, become semi-legendary, of Bahram Gūr.
- 154 Al-Yazīdī, obviously a professional interpreter of dreams.
- 155 Masjid al-Zumur or Izdamur is the Ottoman mosque near Bāb Sha'ūb (*Masājīd*, 14).
- 156 *Midibbir*—Shāmi quoted the saying, *Tufakkir wa-fi 'l-samā'* Mudabbir, i.e. Man proposes, God disposes.
- 157 Author of *Muntakhab al-kalām fī taṣīr al-aḥlām*, Cairo, many editions. See M. J. Kister, 'The interpretation of dreams', *Is. Or. Studies*, Tel Aviv, 1974, IV, 67-103. Ibn Sīrīn is specially famous for *ta'bir al-ru'yā*, interpretation of visions.
- 158 *Ilā haniyyah*, lit., up to here, as one says pointing to the joint of the ring finger (*uḡdat al-biṣṣir*) next to the little finger, or the index finger with the thumb.
- 159 The conjunction with the Pleiades is fortunate in the extreme—this is doubtless discussed in astrological works.
- 160 A reference to the magnificent mosque built by the Ṭāhirid 'Āmir b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb at Radā'.
- 161 Sharaf al-Dīn omits verses 51-52, perhaps correctly as they are weak.
- 162 If this be a correct sense for *ajmābiyyah*.
- 163 *Sanbah* = *waqfah*, from *sanaba*, to stop, stand. Shāmi and Sharaf al-Dīn read *janīb al-Munawwar*.

- 56 There they'll study *al-Bayān* and *al-Azhār*,
Do the *Mulḥah* and the *Shāṭibiyyah*.¹⁶⁷
- 56a A book-cupboard they'll make at his prayer-niche,
A store¹⁶⁸ too, they'll make for the waqf.
- 56b Oil (for his lamps) they have assured to him,
He shall have an intendant, strong of authority,
- 57 In the minaret¹⁶⁹ they'll plant a muezzin
Whose prayer-call will leave Yashū's ear in the
synagogue astoundedly ringing,¹⁷⁰
- 58 So resounding his 'Subḥān Allāh' it'd make the Jinn fart.¹⁷¹
An Imām he'll have, to lead the Prayer,¹⁷² a man of
religion, with a stipend.'
- 59 The Jāmi' took his stately way¹⁷³ to Şan'ā',
'Addil accompanying him, running by his side.
- 60 God preserve and protect his fair and noble brow,
For graciousness was ever of his nature.
- 61 His way took him opposite Shamlah,¹⁷⁴
Passing Shu'ūb north (of the city) on his left.
- 61a The apricot trees joyously trilled their welcome to the
Jāmi',
- 61b The cranes flapped and clapped their wings,
The pear trees shook their leafy (stems),¹⁷⁵
The lips of the glistening orchard, in a smile, half parted.
- 62 A deal of kindness had he done, and charity,
With kind intent attended to his purpose.
- 63 Onward he proceeded till he'd passed by the Khanādiq,
(Where) he recalled a word he'd had earlier with
al-Bustān¹⁷⁶
- 64 That he is poverty-stricken,¹⁷⁷ the most fortunate evening
being
When he has a companion within the walls; he's like an
open yard.
- 65 At once Farwah addressed herself to him,
Waving flags, flag-poles from Shu'ūb.¹⁷⁸
- 164 *Kharash*, *yakhrish*, to decorate. *Lāz* is said to be silver metal of two sorts, green (*akhḍar*) and kohl colour (*akḥal*), it is also said to be like Iraqi Mandeian silver-work.
- 165 The Damascus Mosque.
- 166 'Iyāl Jassār are a wealthy tribal farmer family.
- 167 *Al-Bayān* of Yahyā b. Aḥ. b. al-Muzaḥḥar (ob. ca. 855/1451) (Brock. *Gal.*, *Sup.*, II, 244); *al-Azhār* of Aḥ. b. Yahyā b. al-Murtaḍā (Brock. *Sup.*, I, 244) a well known Zaydī lawbook: *Mulḥat al-I'rāb* of al-Ḥarīrī, (Brock. *Sup.*, I, 488) a grammar; *al-Qasīdat al-Shāṭibiyyah* of Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī (ob. 590/1194) on Qur'ān-reading (Brock. *Sup.*, I, 725).
- 168 *Jubbakhānah*, cf. Redhouse, *Turkish dictionary*, *jebkhan*, storehouse for arms, arsenal, for supplies of any kind. Presumably this is a borrowing from the first Ottoman occupation.
- 169 *Ṣawma'ah*, minaret.
- 170 Yashū means here all the Jews in the Qā' west of 'Addil. *Muṣannin* = *madhūsh*, but the classical sense of ringing, buzzing etc. would also be implied.
- 171 *Tasbiḥ* is the same as *tasbiḥah* (p.310b)—this pre-dawn series of collects certainly disturbs the sleeper, see 10c.cit. The Jinn without material bodies cannot (normally) perform the functions of human bodies. There is an expression *fulān ḥamala al-shay ḥattā ḥaraḡ*, carried the thing until he broke wind. sci. from the effort!
- 172 *Imām dīn*, apparently the same as *imām miḥrāb*, i.e. *imām al-ṣalāh*, the imām who leads the prayer.
- 173 *Dannaq* = *ittajaha*. Shāmi explained it as walking with the gait of, for instance, a camel! 'Addil by contrast, goes humbly—running alongside a riding *ālim*.
- 174 Shamlah is in the Ḥurqān Quarter just before the Sā'ilah leaves the north wall of Şan'ā', on the right of the Sā'ilah. For *yamnat-ih* one must read *yasrat-ih*, with Shāmi and Sharaf al-Dīn.
- 175 *Mawāriq*, pl. of *mūriqah*, usually *mawāriq*.
- 176 Bustān al-Sulṭān Quarter, west of the Sā'ilah which had large garden areas in it and perhaps, at this time building, as the next line implies.
- 177 *Ḥirāf*, poor, without money. This verse has variant readings; the best seems to be that of the *Masājīd*, but the rendering is not entirely satisfactory.
- 178 Shu'ūb was formerly noted for its tamarisk (*athl*) and still has many though less than formerly, and these are its 'flags'. *Adqāl* properly means 'masts' and Sharaf al-Dīn's *arqāl* is incorrect. For *mazāriq*, javelins Sharaf al-Dīn's reading *bayāriq*, flags has been adopted.

- 66 'My palm-leaf mats have had a long life,' said she,
'As anyone who reclines (upon them) knows.'¹⁷⁹
- 67 Mashhad beside her kept a-calling,¹⁸⁰
'How long have I been waiting¹⁸¹ for the Prayer?' she said.
- 68 To her the Jāmi' turned his attention, saying, 'Wait,
The best things are those that are slow in coming.'¹⁸²
- 69 As he entered, the city thrilled for him cries of joy,¹⁸³
Proceeding calmly and with courteousness.
- 70 On the ground of Azāl (Ṣan'ā') may festival ever continue,
And for all time its rank remain exalted.

xv Some Observations on the Development of the Ṣan'ā' Mosque

From his researches al-Ḥajārī arrived at the conclusion that, the Holy Jāmi' Mosque apart, the mosques of the city were small, many and close together, devoid of ablution-places (*maṭāhīr*), pools (*birik*) and wells, except in rare cases,¹⁸⁴ and people used to perform their ritual ablutions in their houses before repairing to the mosque. The multiplicity of small mosques is evidently due to the part they played in the life of the ordinary Ṣan'ānī. Al-Ḥajārī adds that after the 9th/15th century conditions began to improve. Following the plague of 933/1526-7, Imām al-Mutawakkil Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā indicated that many properties left without owners should be applied to the utilities (*maṣāliḥ*) of the mosques. In each Quarter (*Ḥārāh*) he ordered wells should be dug, pools and ablution-places (*birik*, *maṭāhīr*, *muttakhadhāt*) to be constructed, while *sadanah*, imāms, muezzins and well-workers (*sunāh*) to draw water daily from the wells to the ablution-places were appointed, and gardens (introduced ?) irrigated with the used water each day which was replaced by clean water from the wells. As a result people abandoned the smaller mosques without wells and ablution-places, they fell to ruin and were lost without trace. These the Ṣan'ānis call *al-Masājid al-Mansiyyah*, the Forgotten Mosques. Whether it is so simple as he says, his *Masājid* provides ample evidence of additions and enlargements made to the older foundations, to say nothing of the construction of new ones. There seems to have been considerable re-founding of old mosques, often with a change of name. Benefactions are known as *maḥsinah* (pl., *maḥāsīn*); a *sabīl* a draw-well, sometimes with a dome over it, in which case it is called *al-qubbat al-sabīl*, would be a typical benefaction and a typical inscription on it would run, *Ghāfar Allāh li-fā'il al-maḥsinah*, May God pardon the benefactor.

In December 1973 I saw the famous *Miswaddat Sinān*¹⁸⁵ in the cube-shaped Chancellery of the Jāmi' Mosque. It is a long narrow book bound in, probably contemporary, plum-coloured leather with an embossed design in the middle of the cover. The paper is polished yellow-brown or buff colour and the writing beautiful and clear to read. Unfortunately requests to photocopy this book have, in the past, not met with response, whether it be for some vaguely religious reason, or because so much of Ṣan'ā' being *waqf* and parts of this possibly appropriated to private families there is a reluctance to publish its contents. This would be a valuable

source for the history of the mosques until the beginning of the 11th/17th century.

A problem of architectural history in the Yemen concerns the Zaydī attitude towards the minaret. Al-Uṭrūsh, the warlike and learned Imām of Ṭabaristān, in his treatise on *ḥisbah*, gave injunctions that mosques must not be made like churches, contain pictures, be ornamented with gold, hung with curtains or decorated with plaster-work. Minarets must not be raised above the roof-level of the mosque.¹⁸⁶ Al-Ḥādī ila 'l-Ḥaqq, the first Imām of the Yemen and contemporary with al-Uṭrūsh, when in Ṣa'dah, prayed in the mosque which had a *ṣawma'ah*. Certain would-be assassins planned to shoot him from this *ṣawma'ah* and escape by the wall of the mosque.¹⁸⁷ *Ṣawma'ah* basically means a cell or chamber, but comes to mean a minaret in the usually understood sense. The text describing the attempted assassination does not clearly indicate whether the *ṣawma'ah* was a tower or a roof-cabin, but it looks as if it were the latter. In Ḥabūr for instance, and quite a number of other centres, the place of the call to prayer is merely a low cabin at the top of a stair to the roof, but as stated above, in Ṣan'ā' itself the call to prayer is mostly made from the court of the mosque, which might be a survival as a practice from times when there were no tower minarets.

Masjid Ibn Ḥusayn in early times used to be called Masjid al-Ṣawma'ah—it is near the Sā'ilah and was built in the Ziyādīd period about the end of the 4th/10th century. Al-Ḥajārī¹⁸⁸ states that its minaret was restored in the 7th/13th century and (re-)built about fifty years ago. It depends how *ṣawma'ah* is to be interpreted as to whether this mosque originally had a tower minaret or not. Al-Rāzī,¹⁸⁹ recording that a little before his time (he died in 460/1068) the Masjid al-Ṣayāqil of the Sūq al-Ḥaṭab of Ṣan'ā' was restored by a certain Abū Ayyūb of the city, adds, 'It had a minaret but he did not put it back'. Unfortunately he does not say why. Al-Ḥajārī from time to time records the addition of minarets to mosques.

In connection with al-Uṭrūsh's prohibition of decorative plasterwork, al-Rāzī¹⁹⁰ reports that there had been splendid decoration of the *miḥrāb* with *juṣṣ*-plaster and it was perfumed with musk each year for Ramaḍān. However when Yaḥyā b. 'Abdullāh b. Kulayb became Qādī of Ṣan'ā' he ordered these decorations (*nuqūsh*) to be destroyed and plastered it over with the plain *juṣṣ* that is there today, on the grounds that the decorations distracted those at prayer, and he prohibited the ornamentation (*tazwiq*) of mosques. This *qādī* died in 341/952-3, in the Yu'firid period. Whether the first Jāmi' had a flat or concave *miḥrāb* does not seem to be known.¹⁹¹

An interesting feature of many mosques in the north is a sort of bin constructed inside the mosque and plastered over, to act as a repository for discarded religious literature, mainly torn Qur'āns. In Ṣan'ā' fragments of old Qur'āns are kept in *khazā'in al-maṣāḥif*, cupboards made from recesses in the walls, and they are never burned. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Shāmī informs me that in his boyhood scraps of paper were not seen lying about the Ṣan'ā' streets but were picked up and put in a respectable place if found, because the name of Allāh might be written on them. This at once calls to mind the *genizah* but it should not be assumed without proof that it derives from Jewish practice. There are

179 The mats are so worn that the hardness of the floor is felt. *Takiyyah* is here explained by Shāmī as *maḥall al-muttakā*, place of reclining. Sharaf al-Dīn has a rather different version of this line.

180 Al-Mashhad means the Jabbānah. The plea of the Jabbānah is to be understood in the light of a passage in *Masājid*, 40, which is based on al-Rāzī, 92. They used to pray the prayer of first light (*Ṣalāt al-'Atmah*) in congregation (*fi 'l-jamā'ah*) at the Jabbānah, last of all those who pray in the town, and they used to order the *Ṣalāt al-'Atmah* to be delayed so that the people inside the town would be able (to attend) and everyone would be able to obtain what he required, for fear of the quick issuing forth of the night guard.

181 *Mirā'ī* = *muntazir*, waiting.

182 *Al-maḥīḥ yubṭī*, A good thing takes a long time in coming, is a proverbial saying, and as the Prayer is something of great importance—even if the Jabbānah has to wait for it, it is worth the waiting.

183 The Jāmi' enters Ṣan'ā' and is welcomed by the ululations of its womenfolk. Verses 69 and 70 are not found in Sharaf al-Dīn's version.

184 *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. M. al-Akwa', II, 138, records that in the celebrated teaching Jāmi' of Zabīd, there was no pool (*birkah*), only jars and lavatories (*jirār wa-maṭāhīr*) until al-Malik al-Ashraf (last quarter of the 9th/14th century) set up a *birkah* there.

185 *Ghāyat al-amānī*, II, 792, calls it *daftar jāmī' li-awqāf Ṣan'ā'*.

186 R. B. Serjeant, 'An early Zaidī manual of *ḥisbah*', *RSO*, Roma, 1953, XXVIII, 1-34.

187 *Sirat al-Ḥādī*, 387.

188 *Masājid*, 4.

189 *Tārīkh Ṣan'ā'*, 232.

190 *Ibid*, 86; *Masājid*, 24.

191 For the discussion of *miḥrāb* in general, see R. B. Serjeant, 'Miḥrāb', *BSOAS*, 1959, XXII, iii, 439-53.

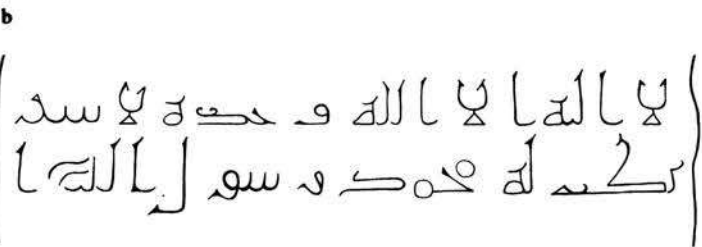
many of these repositories in Şan'ā' mosques.
The wooden *muballigh* or platform in the northern aisle has already been mentioned, where the *adhān* could be repeated after the imām (*yuradd al-adhān ba'da 'l-imām*), but it was said to have

been introduced to hold additional worshippers.¹⁹² This was built in the days of Imām Yaḥyā, who was a great renovator of mosques, but it has since regrettably been removed.

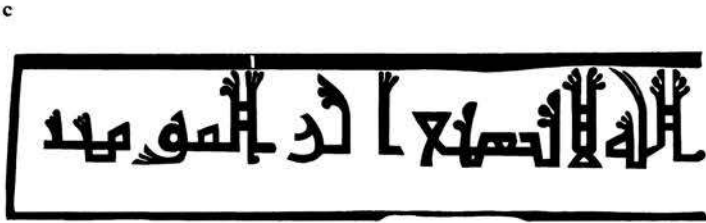
Fig. 17.1 Examples of epigraphy from the Great Mosque.



A partially defaced inscription high on the outside walls on the eastern side (see pl. 18.55).



Fragment of inscription from one of the high western bays (cf. pl. 18.49).



Inscription now built into a wall adjoining the north wall of the eastern minaret (see pl. 18.57).



Section of the continuous Kufic inscription encircling the walls beneath the ceiling beams (see pl. 18.41).

192 In 1166/1753 even the Şan'ā' Jāmi' was so crowded at the Friday Prayer that some prayed on the roof (*Nashr al-'arf*, II, 519).